

presented to the public, they've got to do it from a distance. They're going to do it with helicopters, fighter aircraft, probably not B-52s, early on.

Q: But why, when you read the word war, did you immediately think, this means bombing?

A: Well, I can't relate to your question entirely, because I say that as somebody who was involved in a war in Vietnam, and done a lot of planning, done a great deal of study of American operations, going back to the Civil War, and since, where General Sherman did indeed set a pattern, the "war is hell" pattern, a war on civilian population, in order to break the enemy's will to resist, ^{test} that General LeMay was quite consciously using in World War II. Make war hell for the people you're opposing. And we're a country that believes - the only country in the world that believes that we won a war and ended a war with air power, very specifically with mass, indiscriminate air power. This country believes, the vast majority, that we won a war by virtue of ^{of the} the two greatest acts of terrorism, the greatest massacres of civilians that had ever taken place. Those are the two atom bombs. They're mistaken, actually. They're mistaken to think that that really was critical in ending the war, or necessary to it, or that it did end the war, in my opinion, from the study I've made, but that's what they believe.

They are unaware that the Air Force doesn't think that the ^{terror} air bombs, that those bombs won the war. General LeMay and Hap Arnold and others, and many people connected with the Air Force believe that they won the war with air power in the five months before the atom bombs, with what was in fact a massacre of civilian population larger than either Hiroshima or Nagasaki. The bombing on March 9 and 10 of 1945 of Tokyo, the firebombing of Tokyo, killed between 80,000 and 120,000 people in one night, the largest massacre of civilians in human history, the largest act of terrorism, which I would define as deliberate destruction of noncombatants for a political purpose, and the political purpose here was to end the war.

It didn't do that. In fact, Eisenhower, when he learned about the atom bomb, felt that it was wrong, and unnecessary to use the atom bomb on Japan, and so told Stimson, Secretary of War Stimson. And, he says told Harry Truman that. On the ground that it wasn't necessary, the Japanese - this is in ~~August~~ ^{July} now. He was hearing this in July that the Japanese were ready, were suing for surrender through the Russians, that they were prepared to surrender. He says they were beaten. There was no necessity to use that awful thing."

And he also made a point that isn't quoted very often. He said, "After all, we've already been destroying them, killing as many civilians as possible there in enormous bombing raids, and it hasn't affected them at all," which was true. It didn't affect the war. Okinawa, the heaviest, most bloodiest, fought by suicide missions essentially, ~~which~~ ^{before} virtually all the Japanese died or committed suicide - 70,000 of them - was fought after the heavy bombing of Tokyo and the other countries. It didn't slow up their opposition at all. Frankly, from what I've read of the Japanese generals, they could care less what we were doing to the people of - the civilians, ordinarily. They were very concerned about whether they would be put on trial as war criminals, and whether the emperor would. But their sticking point there was they really wanted to assure that they could keep out of war crimes trials, as well as the emperor.

And in the end, the emperor made the decision, I think not primarily based on the atom bomb, but we know the accounts of the actual meeting, when in fact he said, "No, the line to be drawn is the imperial institution. The emperor must not be put on trial. You guys will have to take your chances." That's just a paraphrase, but a pretty good paraphrase of what the decision was.

Q: Somewhat self-serving of the emperor to take that position.

A: Well, he was the emperor, you know, a descendant of the sun god, sun goddess. And it was very important for the country. I'm certain that the empire did not think of that as

purely self-serving. He was simply playing into what they all said: "We cannot allow the emperor to be lost." And he undoubtedly felt the same. I presume that he did see himself to be the descendent of the sun goddess, and the embodiment of Japan essentially.

I must say, I have read a number of accounts of those meetings. Leon Siegel did a very good book on the ending of the war in Japan, and there's others that I've read. And it sounded to me very much like a conversation that I heard on tape, April 27, I believe - No, perhaps two days earlier. It makes a little difference. April 25, I think, 1973, when Nixon is discussing with Haldeman and Ehrlichman where they will draw the line at prosecution, who they will throw over the side to their special prosecutor once ^eDan had torn the cover off the cover-up, had shown that there was a massive cover-up going on. From that point on they couldn't pretend that it had not been run from high up, but the question was, how high up?

They had wanted John Mitchell, the attorney general, to take the fall. They had to have someone who plausibly could have been high enough up to run all this, and still perhaps was not the president, or not so close to the president that it incriminated the president as well. They were unable to get John Mitchell to take the rap. He did go to prison, but he did it without confessing, "It was I who chopped down the cherry tree. I did all this on my own." He wouldn't do that, because that meant taking the rap. He wouldn't do it even for Nixon. He must have hoped he would be acquitted, but he wasn't.

So, in this conversation, which I've heard on tape, there's a discussion in the Oval Office between Nixon and his two top lieutenants, the ^aGermans, ⁱⁱH.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, and the Teutons sitting around, talking very calmly about how to deal with this, who had to go.

Q: Why do you call them the Teutons?

A: Well, just, that was what they were called. They were called the Huns, people called them. You know, they were Americans, very, very American, southern Californians. But, they had - Haldeman in particular - had close-cropped hair that made him look like the World War I/World War II image of the Hun. He cultivated that. He had a brush cut, type brush cut. It looked very stern. ^{Ehr.} Haldeman always looked very stern, although in fact he was relatively liberal and softhearted in many ways. But they thought of him as being very tough, bushy eyebrows, very combative in Watergate, when he went through this.

The issue was, by the way, connected with me, because John Dean had informed the prosecutors in the course of his plea bargaining with them, had informed them about the break-in to my psychiatrist's office, told the prosecutor that first on - they had discussed it on April 13 and 14, and the president learned on April 15, apparently, which he shouldn't have known what was going on with the prosecutors. So this was now a crime that could be traced directly to Richard Nixon. He had set up the so-called White House plumbers, whose job was to neutralize me, actually. That was the line that was on the memos - it had various aspects.

And one of them was to go into my former doctor's office, psychoanalyst's office, to get information with which they could blackmail me into silence, into not putting out documents on Nixon himself. This was a crime, a clear-cut domestic crime, but they didn't expect it to be found out. And it wasn't found out until Dean - this is a long story, but ^{Dean} having been involved in the cover-up, run the cover-up, was now in the hands of prosecutors, and he didn't want to commit perjury. He was determined not to commit perjury. And Dean understood that the plan in the Oval Office was for him to take the rap as the engineer of the cover-up, little John Dean. He had been counsel to the president, or was at that time.

He said, "I will take the fall for the president, but I will not take the fall for Haldeman and Ehrlichman. If I go, they've got to go." Because they'd been in charge of much more than he was. And apparently, they just didn't feel that he would do that. They couldn't imagine

that this loyal little mole, this little servant of power would actually turn on them, sort of like Diana's butler, you might say, coming out now with his tell-all books. They just counted that he would go to prison for them with his mouth shut, having committed perjury.

Okay, Dean told the men this. And there's an interesting period that comes after that, where the president does manage to bottle that up. He orders the Justice Department not to give the information about the break-in to my judge while I was on trial. It was clearly entitled for at least the judge to look at that and see whether the trial was affected, and basically for me. It would have been hard for the judge to keep that from going to me. This is a long story, not in your -

Q: Well, just -

A: But I'll tell you what I was getting up to, the analogy with the Japanese. If you listen to the tape, what you hear then is, as I say, it's now - they gave the information to the judge on April 27. I think this was the 26th or the 25th, just before the information went to the judge and was about to break.

Q: Which year is this?

A: In 1973. What?

Q: Yes.

A: Okay. In 1973. And they're discussing who is to be blamed, then, in the White House for this break-in to the psychoanalyst's office. Now, Nixon later himself said to Ehrlichman and others that he believed that he had authorized that directly. He knew about it right afterwards. There's a controversy as to whether he was told before the event, and who told

him exactly. Nixon seemed to believe, eventually, that he had specifically ordered it. But in any case, he had set up the whole operation and gave them their basic guidelines of what they were to do to me, and what they were trying to do. He was clearly the boss of the operation they'd been in. And Ehrlichman, ~~under~~ him, was directly under. *under* ,

So the three there are sitting around saying, "Who is to go?" And Haldeman and Ehrlichman are arguing both very calmly, very coolly, the way they do on other tapes, very matter-of-fact way: "You've got to draw up the wagons," the old image, you know, the Indians coming at you, and drawing up the wagons, of the early Western settlers. And he says, "You've got to draw the wagons around the White House," which meant, around their offices. They were inside the line of the wagons. And Nixon was in effect saying, and I think specifically saying, "I think it has to be the Oval Office." He said, "We've got to save the presidency here. That's the important thing. Save the presidency, not me. I just happen to be inhabiting the office at the moment. But we've got to maintain the prestige of the president, the mystique of the president."

And they're arguing very rationally and coolly - no panic, no hysteria or anything. Haldeman is saying, "Well, if you lose me, it's going to be hard to convince anybody that you didn't know, you know. I mean, if I'm out there talking, or pressed by prosecutors, it will look bad for you." And then he also says, "For instance, even if you get somebody lower than me, like *Rhatican, Rhatican* Radican." Radican, who is Colson's assistant, who had been involved and had been talking to the prosecutors about a later effort against me by the plumbers to, quote, neutralize me, Daniel Ellsberg, entirely. I'm sorry, I said that wrong. To incapacitate me, to incapacitate Daniel Ellsberg entirely.

Q: What does that mean?

A: That's what I asked the prosecutor when he told me that. I said, "Well, what does that mean, kill me?" And the prosecutor said, "The words were incapacitate you totally." I said entirely, but totally was the word. He said, "But you have to understand, these guys never use the word 'kill.'" They were all CIA assets. They were all people who worked on the Bay of Pigs. They'd been involved in assassination efforts before, several of them, and were involved actually in an assassination plot at that very time, against Torrijos of Panama. That's another little-known story. But they had been preparing the assassination of Torrijos. Sturges^s, one of these men, was formerly Castro's pilot, and later was involved, when he defected, in a number of plots to assassinate Castro. Hunt, one of the key people here, had been - as a CIA agent - had been proposing the assassination of Castro early on, ^{not in 1954} was involved in the overthrow of the elected leader of Guatemala, Arbenz. And, so they were assassins. Actually, Bernard Barker, known as Macho, was part of a team that was to go in with the Bay of Pigs and kill the more left-wing members of the Bay of Pigs operation once they got in, so that they would not be involved in taking power. It was a group - I think it was called operation 40, team 40, or something like that.

But he says, "Okay, they never use the word 'kill.'" Actually, I don't think their intention was to kill me, for other reasons. Barker himself told Lloyd Shearer of *Parade* magazine, "My orders" - Barker's orders - "were to break both his legs." And actually, I think that is closer to what they had in mind, putting me in a hospital bed, right that particular week. It was the week of the mining of Haiphong, in May of 1972.

Q: That could be incapacitating.

A: Yeah, incapacitating is compatible. I think they wanted me to shut up; I think the legs were not perhaps the key aspect here. I suspect that my teeth were in for a bad time. I think they wanted me to be very quiet for about a week, until they'd mined Haiphong, which was a week after this effort. So, these people then -

Q: So, there's a direct causal connection between the two.

A: Oh, yeah, I think so. Definitely. But that's a long story. That's another story. I tell it in the book, to some extent, briefly. Anyway, I've been wandering around here trying to get to the simple point that came into my head here. He says "Radican," who knew about this effort against me - he says, "Radican," says Haldeman "will be as much trouble for you in the hands of prosecutors as I would be." And Ehrlichman then points out that they can't tie Radican to the president. It's a difference there. So, the point here is, you could afford to give them Radican, which they did. But you can't afford to give them either of us, you know, because if we're there, it involves you. And the president says, "Well, we'll just have to take our chances on that." Telling them, "Your turn off the sled, guys. Say 'Geronimo' as you jump. You're going to go."

And on April 30, he announced the resignations of two of the finest public servants it had ever been his privilege to associate with H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman. And he also said that "John Dean will be leaving the staff." Dean was fired. He didn't accept his resignation. Actually, on the same day, Kleindienst left also. He was the acting attorney general. So, it was a kind of massacre that got a good deal of attention. And this was, you see, three days after the dramatic disclosure in our courtroom on April 27, that, Bernard Barker, at the orders of the White House, had broken into the office of my former psychoanalyst, in Labor Day weekend, 1971, a year and a half earlier.

And that announcement had led to a scene right out of *Front Page*, or, you know, some newspaper drama. It was the one time in a four and a half month trial when the reporters simply leaped up from their chairs, essentially, and ran for the pay phones in the hallway. They didn't wait for a break or anything. They left, in one great rush, because, as one of them said, "Watergate meets the Pentagon Papers trial!" And at last they were in the front

lines. They'd been rather frustrated the previous two months. It was a very, very dull going in the trial, going over these documents. And the witnesses were on the whole quite dull. And they were stuck here while all these amazing revelations were coming out in Washington, where their colleagues in Washington were getting them. All of a sudden, the Washington crimes had been connected, very importantly, with the Pentagon Papers trial. So they were going to get the front page stories for a while. They were excited by that. But that was on April 27. You see, three days later, the resignation of these people, which means the White House is now splitting open for the first time.

Q: Going back to this conversation, I would love to hear the recording itself.

A: Oh, yeah, you can get it. It's very easy. You mean the recording of these guys I said. I thought at the time, when I heard it - I had read the Japanese stuff. And I thought, this is presumably the exact term where the Japanese generals are saying, "No, no, one more big battle. Bloody their nose enough, and they will make terms - better terms for this." Now, the terms that had always been described as the rock bottom terms for ending the war, but they were terms to preserve the imperial institution. No deposing of the emperor. No trial of the emperor, who was really seen as a god by the Japanese at that point. No Japanese had ever heard the voice of the emperor. He was never on radio. The first time they ever heard him was when he was announcing the surrender. They put him on. So, he was a taboo figure, in effect.

So, he had to be preserved. We knew that from the cables we were reading, the intercepts we were making of their diplomatic codes. We knew that they were ready to surrender. Initially, at the very beginning, early in '45, they wanted more. Maybe we can keep Manchuria, or parts of China. Not everything, but, you know, this island or that island. Gradually, the terms that we were reading, that they were presenting to their ambassador in Russia - they were hoping that Russia would be an intermediary for them with the US, and get them better terms.

This was a total delusion, but it was buttressed by the fact that Japan - that Japan and Russia were not at war, and hadn't gone to war. Neither had declared war against the other.

They weren't aware that Stalin had promised, long before, in early '45, that he would invade Japan, China and Japan, the Chinese parts of Japan, three months after the end of the war in Europe, which was May 8, I believe, in Europe. And they had promised three months from VE day he would go into action against the Japanese in Manchuria. In the event, actually, he met that exact target. He went in on August 8, three months after May 8. But the Japanese, in May, were still hoping to get - had no hint of this, and were hoping to get the Soviets into - if not on their side, which some dreamers imagined, early, they might get, at least to help them get better terms.

As I say, first they thought of keeping some of their territory. Not occupying Japan was another possibility, that they'd surrender, but we wouldn't occupy Japan. Or we would only occupy part of Japan, something like that. But ultimately, in the end, at the very last sessions, it came down to who has to be deposed, who can be tried, and hanged, actually. And, the key question that I read in, if you like, to those discussions is, the generals never did agree to surrender terms that did not let them off. Let's draw the line at, you know, wherever their headquarters was, exactly. And the navy, from early on, the navy now, you know, very important in Japan, had taken the line from early on, fairly early on, just the imperial institution. Save the emperor. They said, "Those are the terms." Nobody accepted the idea of unconditional surrender, which meant simply no terms whatever, and the US can hang whomever they want, basically. They never accepted that after the two atom bombings, or after the Soviet entry.

But the Soviet entry on August 8 or thereabouts, which could be foreseen now as early as May, most Japanese experts thought there were two ways to end this war, and you could do it, perhaps right away in May. The fighting was still going on at Okinawa, though. Uh, they

have to be able to keep the emperor. They knew that only from their knowledge of Japanese culture, but also from the direct diplomatic cables they were reading. And they knew something else would do it that the Japanese weren't thinking about. If the Russians come into the war as scheduled, that will show them that they can't bargain with the Russians. They have to bargain with us directly. We are willing to let them keep the emperor. In fact, we wanted them to keep the emperor. There were a couple of people who disagreed with that: Archibald MacLeish, at a rather low level in the government; and Dean Acheson, actually, was one, at assistant secretary level, I think, who said, "Don't let them keep the emperor." But everybody else said, "No, we want the emperor. We want to rule through the emperor. He's a symbol of authority there that will - so that if he can give in effect the orders that our proconsul, that our general in charge wants given, they will be obeyed much better than otherwise. So, we want the emperor."

✓ So, you had two possibilities then: telling them they could keep the emperor, which was true; and/or telling them the Russians were coming in, which would mean right away that avenue of negotiation was over, and they had to - had to deal with us directly, and, we would let them keep the emperor. Most experts thought that there was a very good chance that either of those - and especially in combination - would end the war. And both of those were possible, as early as May or June - certainly in June, or July. At Potsdam in July, actually, reports, notices were actually drafted that would say the Russians aren't coming in. Have the Russians sign the ultimatum that we were giving. The Russians were perfectly willing to do that.

That would almost surely have gotten you a quick end to the - almost surely is too great. But very, very possibly. And there was really no downside to it, except in domestic, political terms. Cordell Hull and others - and I learned this, I remember, in 1960 from a book I read then. Cordell Hull, former Secretary of War or State - I forget which, was lying sick in New York, and he told Byrnes on his way over, "You can't depart from unconditional surrender. The Democrats will take a beating if you depart from the terms of unconditional surrender,

having announced that, and especially if you announce you're going to let them keep the emperor." Because the emperor had been demonized, like he was the Saddam Hussein, the Adolf Hitler, let's say, of the day, and of the war. "The public won't like it if you let them keep the emperor. We're going to keep the emperor, but don't announce it in advance. You're going to have a lot of trouble if you do." So, that was one factor.

*Don't even announce it
to US public; and don't say it
to Japanese all after the Bombing are
used
even if
that is
after the
laws
come in.*

We preferred to get the war over before they [the Russians] came in, if possible, if there was a chance, but not enough to get rid of the unconditional surrender terms in advance. What I'm saying is that nearly everyone in the government proposed to Harry Truman in the course of May and June - And by that I mean, everyone except James Byrnes very specifically, who was designated, going to be a Secretary of State - ~~he~~ wasn't yet acting. ~~of~~ Everyone but Byrnes ~~and~~ ~~Truman~~ proposed to Truman that we announce the Russians are coming in, and tell them we can keep the emperor. And then many of them thought we should also tell them about the atom bomb in advance, but that was less unanimous. They didn't even all know about it.

Every one of his advisors, to the assistant secretary level up said, "You should do these things. They have a good chance of ending the war immediately, before the atom bomb, and in fact, before the fighting in Okinawa was over."

Q: How old were you then, when these events were taking place?

A: When I read that, pretty much what I've told you so far - I read that in 1960. I was 29.

Q: But these events occurred, you were?

A: I was 14. I was 14 in 1945. So of course, I didn't know this at the time. We've gotten onto a kind of interesting connection here, I can tell you. Can I have some water.

Q: Sure. You can move more often if you want to.

A: Is this stuff okay?

Q: It's fine.

A: Okay, it bears a lot on what comes later, more than you might think. In retrospect, in retrospect - to borrow a title - nearly all scholars who actually have worked specifically on the decision on Hiroshima agree that it was understood, throughout the government at high levels, that there was a good chance that - not a certainty, but some people sometimes say - Some, quote "revisionist" scholars will say, "Truman knew he could end the war without the atom bomb." That's an overstatement on the basis of the record. And I think it isn't true, aside from the record. What you see in the record is, over and over, people saying, "There is a good chance that they will surrender as soon as they know they can keep the emperor."

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Now, this of course is totally different from what the public and the soldiers, almost from top to bottom, had reason to believe. Outside the White House and its immediately circles, nobody knew that we had broken the Japanese code, and were aware of their diplomatic correspondence, which made it clear that they were not dedicated to fighting to the death, fighting to the last man, fighting inevitably to prevent an occupation. That was not the case. We knew that from their diplomatic cables. But every American ^{logician + soldier} had reason to believe otherwise, and essentially did believe otherwise. We saw Iwo Jima, very, very hard fighting. Then we saw Okinawa, where some 70,000 other troops all died, hardly any prisoners, many civilians. They'd fought, you know, to the death. They jumped over cliffs, to some extent, in the end, rather than surrender. So that gave every impression of a country that was determined to fight to the death. And that was the impression we had of the Japanese.

As soldiers, our soldiers and navy, on the other hand, were preparing for the invasion of Japan. They were moving from Europe to Japan. They were being given orders for Japan - that is, the Pacific. And they were making every preparation, as far as they could see, up to rather high levels. At the highest level - I was just reading, for example, that LeMay and others, nearly every military, including Eisenhower, said, "There is no chance that the Japanese will stay in this war until the time of the invasion," which was scheduled for November in the first wave, February for the main island, November. They said, "This war is not going to last until November." Almost nobody thought that it would, which was true.

At the high levels of the government, who had secret clearances, higher than top secret, which enabled them to be aware of the fact that we had broken the Japanese code. That was a very closely held thing, which - let me make a guess here - people who know nothing about this would tend to say, if they heard that, that perhaps there were a dozen people who knew that. My guess would be, we're talking now about operators, people who run the thing. If you talk about the privates and the corporals and the majors who were involved in the communications intelligence business, you're probably talking a good thousand people, including intelligence analysts all over the place, who read those cables and interpreted them and worked on them. You're not talking about a dozen people. You're talking about 1,000, maybe many more than that, who knew this. But that would not include most of the generals of the American army or anyone in Congress, anyone in the press at all. The public at large: zero.

So, they were living in a totally different reality, and starting, to some degree, in about March, when they began to see the emperor beginning to talk about surrender terms, the representative of the emperor, but especially by May during the Okinawa fighting, the American public is looking now at an enemy fighting to the death, every man literally committing suicide. By the way, another major factor, a major military factor in Okinawa was literal kamikaze pilots, the divine wind, who would crash their planes into our ships. We lost something like 50 ships. Fifty ships, mostly destroyers, but heavy attacks on carriers,

probably the most loss of life by the navy, I'm sure, of any battle of World War II, or perhaps of World War I - just a large number of in one battle, of navy people being killed.

Suicide, exactly like now, for instance, when people say, "How can..." I suppose now they would be called cowards, right? I mean, people who commit suicide by ramming one of our military installations, the word for them is coward, right? After all, Bill Maher was drummed off television for suggesting that that wasn't perhaps the not just for people who committed suicide in order to kill other people. ^{you} couldn't say that. Susan Sontag was put under terrible fire for suggesting that cowardice was not the issue here. But anyway, if you look back to the kamikaze pilots who were dedicated, and who were on suicide missions, as the only way to get through to those ships, it was an efficient, effective way. It was better than anything else they had.

Okay, the public is watching that, and so it's perfectly plausible to them. We need an invasion or we won't have any influence over the subsequent government. There's no question of being allowed to occupy Japan on any terms. That's clearly out of the question, any more than occupying Okinawa. The people in the government are living in a very different reality, which is: these people are suing for surrender. They are looking for surrender terms. They want to surrender. We could at any time, if we wanted, tell them - we could have the Russians tell them, "Don't come to us. You know, we're not on your side, guys. Go to the Americans directly, not to the Swiss. Talk to the Americans, and tell them what your terms are." We could have asked the Russians to do that. The Russians could have done it.

We were delaying for some reason that's not totally pinned down. There is not what Rumsfeld would call bulletproof evidence, the smoking gun, as to exactly what was in the minds of Truman and Byrnes in their rejection of taking actions to which they were advised by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of State, the acting Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, a number of assistant secretaries, all of whom said, "See if we can end the war. Very

likely, we can, by telling them the Soviets are coming in, telling them that they can keep the emperor. We have nothing to lose by doing that. Tell them that.” One of those may end the war. Two of them will even more likely. They don’t actually say, as some people - they’re sometimes misquoted as saying, “If you do two of these, or you add the atom bomb, tell them, warn them of that. They’re sure to surrender.” Nobody did say that, and you couldn’t say that.

Even when the emperor’s tape – it wasn’t a tape. It was a record, I guess. The surrender terms had been dictated by the emperor. There was a tremendous effort on the inside, the people who wanted to end the war at that point, to guard that disk, or whatever it was, before it went out, because they were afraid that a coup effort would be made to get that. The army still wanted to fight. Some members of the army had not accepted even the emperor’s decision on this. And in fact, they did run a small coup, which was defeated. And part of that coup effort was to get hold of that recording, and keep it from being broadcast. That could have happened.

Q: Wait a second. You’re saying -

A: So, what I’m saying is that even after the emperor had decided to, you can’t say it was 100% sure ^{the Army} they would give up. They weren’t really prepared to give up. They did not want to hang. And a number of them did hang. A couple of them committed suicide, hari-kari. But they weren’t all into that, and they were prepared to see their shores invaded by the US, and more atom bombs used. The atom bomb actually did not change a single vote within the military high consul. The navy was still for, had already been for, surrendering on the terms of the emperor. The army was still, and remained, after the two atom bombs, and frankly, even after the Russians had come in on August 8 - that’s after Hiroshima, and just before Nagasaki bomb. They were still for fighting on.

What made the difference was that the emperor came into the picture at that point and said, “I choose, in effect, the navy position on this,” and also a civilian foreign minister. “I side with that. We will accept the terms if they will promise to keep the imperial institution.” They did not accept, in principle, unconditional surrender. And after that, they did then tell those terms to the Americans. The Americans were still had a controversy in the Americans of whether to accept those terms explicitly, which meant giving up unconditional surrender. And instead they made an ambiguous statement, somewhat ambiguous, which mentioned the emperor as part of the terms. It could be interpreted as meaning they would keep the emperor, but it didn’t quite promise that, even though we did mention it. And the emperor then made a second decision to accept that as tantamount to their terms, to gamble on it, that they would keep the emperor, and not double cross him at that point.

Q: But you’re also saying that there were forces in the US government that were interested in delaying the end of the war?

A: There’s no question that measures that were taken, that were proposed, based on very great analysis, that were proposed in hopes of ending the war earlier, were rejected by Truman with the advice of Byrnes, for reasons, frankly, that he never spelled out.

Q: Why do you think...

A: We don’t know. There is no documentary evidence on that.

Q: Why do you think that might have been the case?

A: I really think a number of reasons. Gar Alperovitz, who did the initial research on this, that brought out all this stuff, having worked from the Stimson files, Secretary of War Stimson, believed then and believes now that the overriding purpose was to keep the war

going until the bombs had been used, both of them, the original uranium bomb and the plutonium bomb, different mechanisms. They wanted to see what it would do to a city, to intimidate the Russians, as the first shot of the Cold War, in fact, to show the Russians what we had, and that we were willing to use it on humans, not just that we possessed the blueprints for it, or had tested the weapon, but to show that we were willing to use it at a time when the Russians knew, from their diplomatic dealings with us, and their getting the messages from the Japanese that no bombs were needed to end that war. They knew, just as, essentially, all of our leaders knew.

And let me be precise here. No one knew for certain that you could end the war with any of these measures, including the atom bomb. As I've just said, there was always the possibility of a coup by the army - and they knew these divisions, by the way, within the army - a coup that would fight to the death, to the death of everybody else, let's say, and maybe even to their own death, in the end, as a form of hari-kari. But frankly, most of them didn't commit hari-kari in the end. So, they were certainly clearly prepared to fight to the death of a great many Japanese, to protect themselves. Well, there was no way of saying that you could certainly avoid that.

In fact, those people who thought the atom bomb would be helpful in doing this envisioned that it would take a number of atom bombs. They had a third ready by the end of August. Then they were going to go into somewhat faster production. They would have had about 10 by December. John McCloy, who was then Assistant Secretary of War, calculated or believed that it would take about 10, now, to convince them. If the atom bomb was going to do it, it wouldn't be one or two. It would be maybe nine or 10. Why? There was no reason to think that the atom bombs themselves would have a decisive impact on the Japanese, the first two, if they hadn't already decided. If we hadn't told them they could keep the emperor - by the way, I think they would have fought on if we hadn't given them at least an ambiguous

assurance that they could keep the emperor. Every indication is they were not prepared to give that up.

And the public was not willing. If you had followed Acheson, for example, on that one, followed Acheson they would have fought, I think, to the end, if we'd invaded. The Russians coming in was going to be such a disappointment to them. They counted on the Russians, in a lot of ways, not just as intermediaries. That was going to be a disappointment that that might end it, but if that didn't do it, knowing then that they were going to be fighting in Manchuria. By the way, a major aspect of the Russians coming in was this: they had many troops in Manchuria, and they did not foresee the Russians coming in. Although the naval blockade put a big crimp in this. But earlier on, they hoped to bring their army in Manchuria back to Japan, to the home islands, to fight our invasion. With the Russians coming in, capturing those troops, fighting those troops, they obviously, if they had been told earlier, they would have realized they can't defend the homeland with those troops. They're going to lose them. So that in itself looked like a disastrous move for them.

Q: But you're saying that the bombs were used to intimidate the Russians who were our allies.

A: They were our allies now, but we were arguing with them already on the questions of Poland, what the regime would be in Poland, the postwar regime. Would it be our preferred regime, or their people? Would there be elections? Where exactly would the lines be drawn at various points? They had been negotiating this right along, and making pretty good headway. But I have a feeling, as I can see your image here, you really are not familiar with some of this stuff?

Q: That's correct.

A: Is that true?

Q: Well, of course I'm familiar with all of the arguments that have gone on...

A: No, all I'm saying is, this is not stuff that is not well-known to somebody who isn't obsessed with Hiroshima, and the ending of the war, as I am. There's quite a few people like that, and I sense that you're not one of them. Is that true?

Q: That may be true.

A: And the difference that makes is just this, that a lot of this is very familiar to anybody who's read a decent book on decision making in Hiroshima, and is totally unknown to everyone else, that is, most of the public. But what I'm saying then is Stimson said, and Truman wrote in his diary, "When the A-bomb is used, then we'll have a lock. Then we can" - this is a slight paraphrase - "we can dictate our own terms." That was the belief of Stimson, as well as Truman and Burns. When this thing goes off, when the Soviets see this - and they have to see it used in combat - that will simplify everything in Europe. We weren't trying to conquer the Soviet Union or occupy the Soviet Union. But all the things we were negotiating about would be much easier when the Soviets realized that we could obliterate them.

And in fact it didn't work out that way. The Soviets took a very hard line, with this almost bravado after the bomb was used. McCoy - Mallin - What was his name? Molotov and others were very lighthearted in talking to people about, "Oh, do you have a bomb in your pocket," that sort of thing, in the negotiations. And they were very tough on - they did not give on the slightest degree on any of the points. So that was a disappointment to Byrnes and to Truman. They really did figure, once they realize - and Churchill was very excited by that, and told his Chief of Staff, you know, "Wait 'til we get this." He said, "Now I know" -

when he heard about the Trinity test - he said, "Now I know why Truman changed his demeanor totally. Before that, he'd been rather diffident and unsure of himself, and he came in that afternoon" - he says now to his general aide. He says, "He came in and he took charge of the meeting. He was forthright. He was confident." And he said, "I wondered, what was the change in him?" He said, "Now I know."

In the evening, Truman told him about the Trinity test, and the fact that Little Boy - it was Fat Man, actually - had been heard. His squalls had been heard miles and miles away. It was a very big test. And, "Now I understand. And now we'll be able to get our way in all these things." Because prior to that the Russians could very well figure, when it comes to maintaining our own regime, or Moscow they can do what Napoleon did, and they can do what Hitler did, and it won't work any better for them, you know, so we're safe. You know, they read history. They must understand. They don't want to invade Russia. And all of a sudden, we had something that - And even, by the way, the distances were such that to bomb Russia with firebombs, you know, would have been very difficult. The distances are just high. They intended to have a huge air defense, and they invested an enormous amount, well into the era of missiles. They misallocated enormous amounts to antiaircraft weapons that were just totally useless against our high-flying planes, and had no relevance to missiles at all. They were obsessed with air defense. But with that kind of air defense, you couldn't do much to Russia with conventional weapons.

What the atom bomb did was to give you the ability to obliterate Russian cities in a way en masse, do to Russia what you could do to Japan with firebombing. You couldn't have done that without atom bombs, and eventually H-bombs. But with atom bombs, Moscow was now suddenly perfectly easy to obliterate.

Q: Is the argument that if we could have done that to Japan with incendiaries, of course we could have done that to Russia with nuclear weapons?

A: Yeah. Well, and that's what our early plans were. On your film McNamara revealed - He's the first civilian that I've ever heard associate himself with that bombing. He wasn't a civilian then. He was a lieutenant colonel. He's the first staff officer, except one. I met one of his later colleagues who was involved in that operation. So he describes then how we then turned to the next 66 cities in Japan, one after another. Now, you can be sure - look it up. How are those targets described? I haven't seen it. I'll just guess. The target is described as Nagoya, Yokohama whatever. I'm certain that they did not describe the target as the certain steel mill, a particular dockyard, a particular pier, as before, under the high, the daylight precision bombing with the Norden bombsight conducted at 25,000 feet.

The earlier targeting, under Hansell, his predecessor, in Tokyo, would not have taken the target as Tokyo. This could easily be found out, I bet, in the archives. The target would be this particular base. Now, they weren't hitting that base. They were hitting things around the base for lots of reasons. They just weren't that accurate. They weren't destroying the base, but the base was the target point. In Tokyo, no military target was the target point. The Tokyo raid of March 9, the target was not all of Tokyo, but a particular part of downtown Tokyo, where everything was densest, where the housing was densest, where the fires would spread. It was part of Tokyo, a large part, a number of square miles of Tokyo. I'm sure in the later cities, which weren't as large as Tokyo, I'm sure the target was probably described - They might decide, not this part of Nagoya, this part. But it was Nagoya. That's what they came into in the last five months of World War II.

And of course, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they had an aiming point. But the aiming point was actually - I think the aiming point was the Y Bridge, in Hiroshima, where I've been, a fairly distinct landmark, where the two rivers come together, and the third, and so forth. Good aiming point. But that was an aiming point just to assure that, you know, where the bomb went, so it would kill as many people as possible. Kill as many people as possible, that

was the criterion. And that was the criterion in Nagasaki, where however they missed. The clouds covered their aiming point, and in fact, in the end, they used, I believe, as an aiming point - The clouds just opened for a moment, and the ground zero was actually the Catholic cathedral in Nagasaki. It was the largest Catholic or Protestant Christian cathedral in Asia. And it was in a part of the town, Nagasaki, where naturally most of the minority of Catholics, Christians were in that particular area. And it happened to be a rather poor area, generally.

The Japanese, having heard all about the Norden bombsite all this time, like others, assumed that we had hit what we aimed at, in particular. That had not been the original aiming point, by the way. So I've had two or three Japanese, when I've been back to Nagasaki, I talk to the Hibakusha there, you know, in the groups I go in. Two or three people in Nagasaki say, "Why did Truman choose, desire to destroy the Catholic population of Nagasaki?" Because by the way, it was the largest concentration of Catholics in Japan. That's who we killed. So on the assumption that that's who we intended to kill, a reasonable assumption, they couldn't entirely figure out why.

And there was another other aspect of that. Why don't we hear as much about Nagasaki, I asked several people, as about Hiroshima.

Q: Well, it was second.

A: What?

Q: It was second.

A: It was second. But I mean, you know, the Hibakusha of Hiroshima. He said, "You know, the Hibakusha, the survivors in Hiroshima, they didn't get much attention later, but they got some." In Nagasaki, less, because this is what I was told. This isn't the last word, but this is

what I was told. Said, "Well, two things. They were Catholics, the main people killed were Catholics." And it was the poor section of town. It was on the other side of the tracks. And people in Nagasaki didn't care that much about them, poor Catholics. And they didn't get the attention.

But the question then was, why did Truman do this? So I spoke to a professor who is an expert, who himself had lost an eye in Nagasaki. He was working in a factory at that time. He was about 17. And a piece of flying glass took out one of his eyes. He's a great expert on all this decision-making. He was the one asking me why. He said, "It had to be he chose that section of town." And I said, "I don't know." First of all, I knew the story of Nagasaki, so I knew that it was a secondary target, that they had to make a couple of bombing runs. They were afraid it was going to be entirely - the reason it got killed, got destroyed was that the main target, which I've forgotten at this moment. ^{Niagata} ~~Niagata~~ or something like that was totally covered by clouds. And they were ordered not to do this except on visual bombing, because they might waste a bomb over a field somewhere and just hit a lot of rice paddies. It has to be visual bombing. This was not to protect people; this was to kill people - as many civilians as possible. The first target, then, for the Nagasaki crew, ^{Boats Can} ~~boxcar~~, is clouded over totally. They can't get at it. So they go to their next target: Nagasaki again clouded over. They were determined not to have to go back to the base with that bomb in their bay. They may even have been ordered to - I've forgotten this point. I used to know it - to have dropped it somewhere, you know, but don't land with this bomb, you know, on our base. The accident problem is a little too great. So, they didn't want to have to just jettison the bomb.

The usual account of that is that the clouds opened miraculously, and they saw the spires of the cathedral down below. And they said, "Ah, at last we've got a visual aiming point," and they dropped the bomb. Had the clouds not opened, Nagasaki is safe. That's the usual account. From my knowledge of military operations, and military psychology in general, I

had a suspicion about that. And I did come across some doubt. I talked to somebody who knew that operation more closely. I've forgotten exactly who it was at this point. I think somebody who was in the plane. And I said, "Did the clouds really open?" And he said, "Nah." He said, "They opened - we could see that thing above, that thing ahead, but not enough for what you'd call visual bombing. They closed again. We could see we were over the city." He said, "We knew we were over the city." They didn't open. They did what they had been forbidden to do. They had radar. They were forbidden - They dropped it by radar rather than, you know, not have a target and go back.

But anyway, I said to my friend, "So, on the one hand I knew all of this." Well, that meant they hadn't picked the Catholic section. They didn't know the Catholic section. In fact, I'm sure they wouldn't have had that on their map. Nobody knew that degree. Nagasaki is well known. They would have known this neighborhood from that neighborhood, but the intelligence people - You know, a lot of people had been to Nagasaki. That hadn't changed. But the intent was not to drop it on this neighborhood or that. It was to drop it on the most number of people, which they didn't succeed in doing, see. Nagasaki was a more powerful bomb than Hiroshima, 20 kilotons. Hiroshima is 13.5 kilotons. A kiloton is 1,000 tons of high explosives equivalent, 1,000 tons. So the Nagasaki bomb then was 20,000 tons equivalent which, by the way, is almost exactly what Nixon dropped in Linebacker II over Hanoi and elsewhere. It was a Nagasaki bomb, the equivalent of a Nagasaki bomb.

Q: Linebacker II being?

A: Linebacker II was the Christmas bombing, was the Christmas bombing. Linebacker I, which we may come back to that, was the B-52 bombing of North Vietnam in connection with the mining of Haiphong, to try to throw back the North Vietnamese offensive of 1972, and that was in May of 1972. He called that Linebacker, being such an old football player, bench football player. He loved football. It was one of his great obsessions. So that was

Linebacker I. Then, Linebacker II was the Christmas bombing from December 18 to the end of the year, of that same year, 1972. They dropped 20,000 tons of bombs, which is pretty close to being as heavy bombing as you ever have had in 11 days of conventional bombing.

But the Nagasaki bomb was one bomb with the same explosive power. But figures differ, of course, on this. The usual figures for Hiroshima are 80,000, 78 or 80,000 dead immediately, plus many more from radiation later, and fire injuries later, by the end of the year. But immediately, 80,000. Nagasaki is usually given as 58,000, immediately. Fewer people killed with a bigger bomb. And the reason was, too many clouds. They weren't able to drop it in the most densely populated area. They hit it a little bit out. And there are surrounding hills from Nagasaki that broke the explosion in part, so it didn't kill as many people. But, you know, successful anyway, from their point of view.

But If I can just say, I was saying that I could tell this friend of mine, this professor, first, I know how this came about. And they were certainly not aiming at the Catholic cathedral. But second, I said, "I know you're an expert on Japanese politics. I'm not an expert on American politics, but I can tell you, 100% certainty, no American president would have picked a Catholic population of a Japanese city to target. I said, "That's inconceivable, absolutely impossible that this would have happened."

Q: It's bad politics.

A: That's what I was thinking. These were actually Christian Japanese, which is to say, humans. They had souls. And for political reasons, to The New Deal, which in those days could count on the Catholic vote - And we had a Democratic president in there, both FDR and Truman. The idea that you would single out baptized Catholics to slaughter was out of the question. Right? I knew that by that time. And I told him that. I don't know how much I

convinced him. You know, I mean, you look at the city, it was almost entirely Catholic. You look at that and you think: that was an accident?

Q: There's one thing you said that I think is really interesting to me, is that the change here was about intentions.

A: Pardon me?

Q: The change here was about intentions, from intending to bomb a military target to intending to bomb a city.

A: Yeah, yeah. Definitely. Definitely. I know I keep rambling. I did say earlier - and we can come back to this - when the first atom bombs then came in, that confirmed the Japanese targeting, which you see was quite different from the American air force in Europe, until near the end, until late '44 and early '45, and through '45. In Europe we'd begun then to do the same kind of bombing that the British had called terror bombing, from as early as 1942. It became their main way of bombing from February of 1942. They called it terror bombing, but also area bombing. I think those are the two, the two names: area bombing or terror bombing. And it's a very different technically, kind of bombing. The American air force as it built up in the 20s, but especially the 30s, had developed a doctrine...

Q: We have to stop for a moment.

Q: It goes back to this issue about intentions, that what you're saying is that - and you can correct me if I'm wrong - that when you drop a bomb, you're saying something to somebody else. There's an intentional element, a mental element, and that there's this sea change. And the way you expressed it - and yes, I am going to look, because I'm really interested, the sea change is that if you look at the targets as defined in 1942, '43, maybe

these are targets, specific factories, or a military operation. In 1945, the intention is no longer to bomb specifically military targets. The intention becomes different. The intention is to bomb an area or a city or a population.

A: People.

Q: People.

A: People. You're not bombing a place where there aren't people. You're bombing places where there are the most people.

Q: And here's another thing. When we intend to do something, we intend that people understand what we're doing, in a certain way. And when you said, for example, terror bombing -

A: Which is what they called it, by the way.

Q: Right. Are we trying to communicate? Are we trying to say something? Let me see if I can do this correctly. I wanted you to talk about that change in intention, in intentionality, and I wanted you to talk about, are we trying to communicate to them something that is different than what has been communicated before? Does this make sense, what I'm saying?

A: Yeah, we can go into that on the tape if you want.

Q: Sure.

A: Yeah. But it wasn't mainly a communicative thing at that point. It was a question of, in a vaguely defined sense of making it impossible for them to function - Are we on? Is the tape on?

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, okay. Let me know. Have we been on all this time? I didn't know.

Q: It just came on.

A: Oh, yeah, okay. The Air Force talks a lot about targeting on - whether you target capabilities or will, or, military people talk about that, whether your objective is to affect the enemy's capabilities or his will. The Air Force has been very clear, going all the way back, that you're trying to do this, both of those, simultaneously. You're trying to destroy capabilities, concrete, you know, physical destruction, or, in the case of human parts of the society and the machine, demoralize them, make them incapable, really, of functioning, and to affect the minds of those people who survive, or who have not been bombed at all yet, literally to terrify them, to make them feel, enough is enough; we don't want this; we don't want to die that way like the other cities that have been bombed, and in some way to make them revolt, basically, to mutiny, revolt against their people.

It's what the German high command accused their home front of having stabbed them in the back by strikes, by demonstrations, organizations, in 1918, that caused the parliament to go for surrender terms at a time when Ludendorff and the others say, "We're doing fine here, you know. Another offensive, and we'll deliver a victory here." And so they went into the 30s believing they'd been stabbed in the back. Well, the idea here is to make, then, the civilian population first incapable of turning out war goods, and supplying the armies, and at the same time, make those who survive so desperate because of these physical conditions, their

lack of food, breakdown of the transportation, the logistics and everything, and their fear, their terror, at what will happen to them, that they stab their generals in the back, that they go to their political leaders and say, "You must sue for surrender."

Now, that theory of air power, in particular that of the Italian general, ^{du}Dohet, was taken up by Billy Mitchell, by various pioneers of air power in this country, by various people around the world. And the idea really was that with a rather small number of bombs, you could so demoralize and terrify the civilian population that you'd get this political effect. What they'd seen in World War I, for instance, was a major part of this. They sent a few planes over, and a number of Zeppelins, dirigibles, over London and other cities. And they extrapolated from the kind of panic that that caused - Of course, it caused almost no physical damage, handfuls of people being killed, if I may say, almost no, you know, in this context, where otherwise we're talking about thousands, and tens of thousands of deaths.

So, the physical damage is not great relatively, but they said, "The civilians are terrified." There was a general feeling among the military staffs that the civilians were much more easy to demoralize than troops, and that air power then offered itself as a way to go over the front lines, drop a few bombs - it wasn't a question of exterminating populations - and you win the war. And this was wishful, based on some evidenced, as I say, of some civilian panic early on in Paris and London and other places. It reflected of course their general contempt for civilians, and for enemy civilians.

But it was also a very powerful wish at stake there. The ground battle in World War I was the most horrifying, daunting spectacle that warfare has ever produced. You had tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands on both sides killed in a single day in Verdun and Paschendale and some of these other campaigns. So the idea of just war, that it focuses only on the military of the other side, that you operate on the armed forces of the other side, and that there is a clear, total ban on the deliberate destruction of noncombatants, that's the core

of the notion of just war, of justice in war, going back to Augustine, but even more to when this just war theory was elaborated in the Middle Ages, and was the heart of laws of war up till now, the ban on the indiscriminate but deliberate destruction of noncombatants.

So war was seen as a kind of duel. It had this chivalric attitude to it, except that a lot of generals had a bellyful of that restriction, or that way of fighting a war in World War I, both on the Eastern front and the Western front. They didn't get anywhere. They couldn't move the front lines at all. And they were sending these men over the top, out of the trench, through mud, into barbed wire, where they were simply mowed down by machine guns. And the first hint of that sort of aspect of modern warfare was in the Civil War, but in particular in World War I. Anything would be better than that, and they certainly didn't give up the idea of national sovereignty, of wars. They didn't believe World War I had ended all wars. So the way to be ready for the next war, said the air power people, was to go after civilian morale, civilian will. Nowadays, now that they can hit some targets, they talk about command and control communications. Go after communications center. There wouldn't have been a chance in the world you could hit those until now with our precision guided munitions. But the idea, though, of aiming directly at the will of the other side was there from early on.

There was always two competing doctrines as to how to do that among air power people. I should mention two other factors on their consideration. These guys loved to fly. They liked flying machines. They loved a faster, higher, speedier airplane. It was very thrilling to them. It was what they loved to do. I'm sure the cavalry probably felt that way about their horses or something. So when it came to a ^{choice} ~~trace~~ of a method of fighting war that involved their flying planes, and being decisive, or flying the fastest, hottest planes that had a great appeal for these top people. And that's actually quite a major factor for instance, in choosing between planes or missiles in the 50s. You don't ride a missile. You sit in a concrete shelter somewhere and you push buttons. It was not really what they signed up in the Air Force to do. Also, close air support of the army was not what they really were interested in doing.

The second point is, the very close relationship with aircraft manufacturers at every level. This is kind of submerged. Dohet himself was partners, financial partners, with a major aircraft manufacturer in Italy. This has turned out to be the case all through - well, to get R&D on planes that would be good for passenger or cargo planes, civilian uses. The R&D was mainly done by the Army Air Force, and the excuse had to be to build these bigger, faster, larger planes, to get a huge aircraft industry going. As a matter of fact, you couldn't have had a commercial one if you didn't have the military of the country as the main customer for those planes, to build the planes. So that was a pressure toward imagining that air power could be a very crucial aspect of winning a war.

Now, of course, in most countries, the continental countries in particular, the army was the dominant, by far the dominant power. And they did not want to give up - they didn't fly planes. And they were not interested in having the war won by planes, and they correctly surmised that you wouldn't win a war by planes alone. You had to have boots on the ground, as we've heard in Iraq, just recently. Got to have boots on the ground, to take the ground and to hold it. What could you accomplish by the air power? See, there were two main theories of it. The dominant one in the US Air Force was high level, precision bombing, high level to get above the fighters and above the anti-aircraft, precision bombing with the Norden bombsight that supposedly allowed you to hit a pickle barrel, which it didn't, actually. But they thought it did, or it might eventually. And therefore, they were going to emphasize the capabilities of the other side, hitting his bases, his munitions factories, oil supplies, ports, railroads, and so forth, surgical strikes, in effect, that would make the other side incapable of fighting the war, and you would win the war that way, perhaps with not much ground fighting at all.

There always was another strain of this, which actually did start with Dohet, and that is that the main target is the minds of the civilians. And again, the thought was: kill the civilians, which

was against the rules of war up till that time, against this moral notion, but do it so as to win the war quickly. You don't have to kill too many. It will happen fast. They'll collapse. That theory, that hypothesis, was totally wrong, empirically. Nothing like that ever happened in any theater. No civilian population ever cracked under that bombing, light or heavy. So one aspect of that problem was, right away, to do it that way, you need a lot more planes. It's going to go a lot longer. You're going to kill a lot of people. It's going to get kind of comparable to the killing of soldiers. What I'm saying is that the ethical thing they looked at was: is it better to kill a few civilians, or millions of soldiers, over years? Well, so you cross the barrier. You say, "Okay, a few civilians." Then it turns out the civilians don't buckle that fast. You don't kill as many of them as expected to, per ton of bombs, per flight load. The defenses are heavy. Here's what they ran into, in terms of the air power theory.

*So - kill
more civilians*

Now, the other theory, meanwhile - it took them a long time to realize the fact that they couldn't hit anything that accurately. It was wrong to believe that they could put a factory out of action from the air unless with an awful lot of bombs, and repeated raids. And there were these technical considerations. Meanwhile, the air defense was much more powerful than they'd expected. The original doctrine was, the bomber will always get through. You don't need to worry about fighter planes. Don't worry about anti-aircraft. The bomber will get through. Wrong. The rates were such of destruction that you'd lose your Air Force, you know, against a heavy defense if you didn't have fighter escort, and if you didn't fly high enough. So the accuracy was wrong. They were just disappointed in what they got out of it.

Now, with an atom bomb, where it just takes one bomber to get through, that's pretty likely to get through. That changes that. Because an air defense can, say, get 90%, if it's a fantastic air defense. More likely, it will get 10% of the bombers. But even if you've got it up to 90% or something, if it's an atom bomb or an H-bomb, that's enough. The one that gets through is the one that destroys the target. But with the conventional bombs they had in World War II, the defenses did matter. So here was the first turning point, now, in the whole strategy. The

Americans prided themselves on this high level precision bombing. It's what they trained for. The British started with the same, but they discovered their losses were too great, that they couldn't keep it up very long. So what? The other services didn't regard that as critical anyway. But the Air Force was not only fighting for its life as a service, but it was all that Britain could do in 1942. They couldn't land troops on the continent. They wanted to convince the US that they were still major military partners, they weren't just on the dole, and that the lend lease they were getting was for a real military contribution. All they could do was send bombers over Germany. But the bombers were getting shot down in the daylight, too much. They couldn't do that very long. Then they wouldn't be in the war at all. It would be the American show.

So, in February of 1942 - Now, this is two years after the blitz. They've been at war now since 1940, actively declared war in 1939. In 1942, the Americans had just gotten in the war a month earlier. To show them now that we were still in the war, the British, they changed the strategy. The RAF will go in at night, will do night bombing. The next thing they discover is they have great trouble finding even a city at night with the radar they had available then. There's no question of picking out a particular target, even a railroad yard or a bridge or a factory. The only thing you can find is a town or a city, if that. Frequently in the war the British papers would say, "We bombed ^{Pennemunde} Painamund or something. We bombed so-and-so last night." The German papers would say, "Seventeen cities were attacked last night," and they'd name the cities, you know, and so on, meaning the bombers had gone all over the place, and they all thought they were bombing one target, but they were bombing different cities. That was the problem of finding places at night.

But generally, with pathfinders, and better radar and so forth, you could find the city. That's all you could find. The city is the target, which is to say, the sleeping people as the target. And some people did then come up, including Lord ^{Chartwell} Chartwell, the civilian science advisor that Churchill depended on, who said, "If we burn enough housing, we'll de-house the



German population. They'll be out in the cold. How can they work you know, with no place to sleep at night?" Well, of course, you're doing this at night when they're home sleeping, so de-housing is a euphemism for slaughtering the population down there. They did choose essentially areas of workers' housing, for one reason, not just for class interest, but because the workers' housing was closer together, and the chance that a fire would spread from one house to another was much more with workers' housing, which often is right next to each other, than suburbs, or, you know, high class, where you might be getting some CEOs and things, but there's a lot of green space between their houses.

So, they began burning down cities. This was started with an actual order in February - I used to know the exact date - February of 1942. I read this in a RAND report for the first time. It made a big impression on me. A guy named Fritz Sallagar, German émigré, who wrote a thing called *The Road to Total War: Escalation in World War II*. And I practically memorized that piece at RAND. I read it over and over. It had so much of insight to give as to how wars developed.

Q: What year did you find this at RAND?

★ A: I read this in 1958, probably '59, when I first went to RAND. I think it was originally classified, and then later they declassified it. So I think it's available declassified. I haven't seen it for 40 years. But I particularly remember this point. The cabinet okayed this new targeting system which was cities. It wasn't cities. It was housing, civilian targeting. However, as before, they continued to say for each city, which was designated as a target, so many air bases, so much railway, so much steel production, and so forth. It didn't name those as DGZs, desired ground zeroes, target points. But it just listed, as if that's what you were going after.



And the air minister - I think it was Portal - wrote in the margin of the order that went to the head of bomber command, "I trust you understand that the targets - that these are not the targets of the bombing. The targets are the built-up housing." Lest anyone be confused by having mentioned that there was a military base in this thing, to be confused and think that's what you were aiming at, which would put your bombs away from the housing, they wanted to be very clear, it's the housing we're going after. That was never admitted to the British public from day one, from February till the end of the war. Ministers in England would often - you didn't have mail from Germany or radio. But apparently they would get mail somehow, somehow, or some news reports from co-religionists, Lutheran ministers or whatever, in Germany, saying "Our churches are being bombed. Our people are all being killed here."

And a number of times during the war, members of Parliament would raise, in the question period, "Can there be something to these charges" that Goebbels was making, of course. You know, it's terror bombing. "Is it possible that we're going after population?" And always, the airmen would say, "Absolutely not. Our targets are precise military targets, you know, bases and whatnot essential to the war effort." This was a conscious, total lie, from beginning to end of that war, for the British.

But meanwhile, the Americans were refusing to take part in that kind of bombing. Our Americans said, "That's baby killing. That's terror. It's immoral. It's wrong. It's murder. Murder, murder, murder. We don't do that." And they did their best to hit oil refineries, and this and that, except that increasingly they did become aware they really weren't hitting them with the Norden bombsite. And eventually, then toward late in '44. First they said, "Well, we just don't have enough," so they kept with their targeting, abhorring the British system, right through '43, with a couple of exceptions. We took part in the bombing of Hamburg, which was a firestorm, where we created a firestorm that we had some role in it. It

was mainly a British role, which killed, I think maybe 38,000, 40,000 people in this firestorm. And we did a couple other things like that, but generally it was precision bombing.

Then in early '45 especially, we took up the British approach. And LeMay was involved in this. He wasn't at a high level then. He was just a squadron commander or something. But he was one of those who -

Q: We have a problem here.

[break in recording]

A: I want to try to convey something that's very, very hard to get through to people, and which nothing in the world has apparently really done, and that is that we are living on the edge of hell. We are on a precipice. This species, this world, is moving along the edge of a precipice here, in which the fires of hell are actually burning right now. And we seem to be sleepwalking, and with very little awareness. I'm talking actually about, in answer to the question, not where we are - I've just defined that, and I can make it very concrete - but how did we possibly get here? How was it that humans like ourselves, really like ourselves, our brothers, our fathers, our grandfathers, how did they come to construct the machinery of hell, actually, of holocaust, of catastrophe?

My belief is that if people learn it sort of the way I learned it, which was not initially through books, the kind of thing I'm giving you here, but looking at actual war plans, and how they came into being, why they're what they are it can make plausible something that's just otherwise unbelievable. We know about the Holocaust. We like to think, well, that was done by Germans, by Nazis, by people who were terrorists at best, or sadistic racists at worst. And it doesn't have a lesson for what could happen by us, or to us. And that's not the way it is. All the machinery, the plans, the preparation and the training, and the discipline for devastation

on the scale of 1,000 Holocausts, 1,000 Holocausts, has all been made. And it's been made by Americans, and by Russians who aren't that different, who aren't different at all from the Americans. And it's coming into being by other countries as well. Now, I'm trying to explain how, step by step, people got into the frame of mind where they were willing to do this, to construct this doomsday machine, which is what we've had for 40 years now.

Just to go back, a minute or two. In '42, the British, wanting to show the Americans that they have a contribution to make, which they can't do on the ground, have to do it with their RAF, with their bomber command. And the bomber command can't stay in the air if it flies by day. It can't hit anything other than a city if it flies by night. So, the targets are changed from factories and bases to housing at that point. With the Americans looking at that and saying that goes against our doctrine, and goes against the rules of war, civilization. It's totally barbarous, barbarous, horrible. How they explained to themselves how the British could do this, I don't know. But they saw it happening. And they didn't approve at all.

But in early '45, in January and February '45, the Americans begin to do the same. They try to create a firestorm in Berlin. They tried again and again and again. And I'll explain what a firestorm is in just a second. But they didn't get one. They killed, however, 25,000 people in one night, 25,000 in Berlin. A little later, in Dresden, totally undefended city with no military target whatever in it, crowded with refugees, the RAF firebombed Dresden, and did create a firestorm. They killed - we don't know how many were in the city - a minimum of 38,000 people by some calculations, possibly 130,000 people, somewhere in between. Eighty thousand is a good figure, but nobody really knows. That's the town that Kurt Vonnegut and his friend were in, in *Slaughterhouse 5*. They were in a slaughterhouse below the ground, which protected them from the firestorm up above. And when they came out of their slaughterhouse, out of this storage area which was refrigerated, in the morning, they found a flattened city, Dresden, filled with the houses, filled with gingerbread people. The intense heat of the firestorm had shrunk the bodies. Those that weren't burned were asphyxiated into

small figures that he said were like gingerbread cookies. And he spent several weeks in helping the Germans - he was a prisoner of war - clean them up.

And I met Vonnegut once, and talked to him about *Slaughterhouse 5*. And he said, "You know, when I came back from the war with my friend Bernie" - They'd both been prisoners of war together. He mentions Bernie in his book, *Slaughterhouse 5*. And he said, "We came back, and we were coming in our troop ship past the Statue of Liberty." He said, "As we came past, I turned to Bernie, and I said, 'Well, Bernie, what did you learn from all that?' And Bernie said, 'Never to trust anything my government says to me again.'" I said, "He was referring to the bombing?" He said, "Yes." He said, "We'd been told about the Norden bombsite, and that our targeting of bombing was strictly precision military targets." He said, "Well, that was wrong." So that's what he learned from that.

That was the change, then, for the Americans in early '45. LeMay had picked up that idea that this is the way, actually, to hurt their war effort. Mass fire will do it, is a better way of doing it. Meanwhile, in the Marianas, in Guam, I guess it was, his predecessor, who he replaced, was a guy named General Haywood Hansell. And Hansell had been one of the very top strategists of the Air Force. This doctrine that I described earlier of precision bombing was in significant part Hansell. He was very revered in the Air Force, very, very famous as a doctrine person. But he wasn't producing very much in Japan, with the bombing they were doing, for several reasons. Here it wasn't air defense so much. You had the B-29, which could fly above air defenses. But it turned out there were very high jet winds above there that threw them off course, and the weather was bad most of the time, so they couldn't see through the clouds. They couldn't run many missions, and when they did, at that altitude, they weren't hitting what they wanted.

Hansell was very much against firebombing and area bombing. He thought precision bombing, for both moral reasons, which he took seriously, and also, the way to win a war, the

Air Force way, the US Air Force way, was the way to do it. So, he was actually encouraged and ordered even by Lauris Norstad and Hap Arnold in Washington. They wanted the firebombing to start. And here, one thing goes way back. The advocates of air power were very impressed by what happened to Tokyo in the Tokyo fire and earthquake and fire of, I think, 1923, the devastation that was caused by that. We're going back to '23 now. The Japanese had been our allies in World War I. But they were still looking around the world for what air power might do. And plans for burning Tokyo in case we should be at war with them someday, was the perfect target.

Tokyo was one place that attracted the idea of firebombing very early, because the houses were Tatami. They were paper houses, bamboo, wood, city of wood and paper. And they could see from the earthquake that if you could get a good fire started there, you could really do something. The idea then of putting Tokyo to the torch was in the minds of top American Air Force pilots, or planners, in the early 20s, or almost 20 years before Japan became our enemy. It just was a target sitting there. The B-29, above all, was built as the people running it called it, "a destroyer of cities." And Tokyo was on the minds then of a lot of people.

LeMay did not invent the idea of firebombing. Norstad and Arnold, his superiors sent him to replace Hansell, basically to think of - his direct orders were not, put Japan to the torch. But because they knew he was open to that, and Hansell was very resistant to it, so Hansell was rather bitter about this. He was relieved. I've read his memoir. And he says, by the way, we could have done it with precision bombing. We were going to get the - I think the APQ-7 or something radar later, and we would have done a lot better job. We didn't have to do all that, he says in his memoirs. But LeMay comes in. LeMay sees that they're not hitting anything from 20,000 feet. And he knows that Norstad and the others in Washington are very open, to say the least, to the idea of firebombing.

And now, LeMay does what is always regarded - not by him, but everybody in the Air Force - as not only one of the greatest feats of air power ever, but a courageous command decision. And this is a theme, I think, that will come up quite a bit, so it's very interesting to look at what the courage involved was. First of all, as McNamara tells the story, earlier, he had said that to get the abort rate down in Europe, "I, LeMay, will fly in the lead plane, going through the flak and the fighters. And anybody who aborts will be court marshaled." But there was another side to it that McNamara didn't mention, that I remember very clearly. LeMay ^{now from} softened the statistics that the evasive action they were taking around the flak was causing their bombs to go off target. That meant to LeMay, you had to go over again. You didn't destroy the target. You'd have to do it again. So the evasive action to save your lives was - and by ordinary human nervousness, you know, and you see flak blooming below you, or fighter planes coming at you very hard to go in a straight line.

So, he said, "The fact is, though, that's not saving lives. It's costing lives, because we have to go to the target two or three times, you know, through this stuff again. We're going to go through once. And we're going to do that by targeting on the lead plane, the lead plane, not individual navigation. I will be in the lead plane. And we are going to go straight through the flak, without evasive action. And that's what he did. If you've seen the movies, or pictures or anything, here's the flak, blossoming all around you, and the fighters coming at you, and so forth. And he's going straight ahead, to get the job done, not just to do it in a more brave way. And you can imagine what the pilots behind him were thinking, you know, as they had to do this. But actually, it was effective in getting the target destroyed. (?)

Now, what McNamara really says nothing about, but must have known about, he talks about, in his account, the decision that he helped make of coming down from 25,000 or 15,000 to 5,000 feet. One thing he doesn't mention is, at 5,000 feet, you're not going in at daytime against defenses. Because you'd be destroyed. The Japanese fighters were limited from fuel and other reasons, but 5,000 feet was fine for them. The flak was fine for them in daytime.

Going from 15,000 to 5,000, McNamara doesn't mention, means going at night. And going at night means your target has changed. Your target is now housing, not any longer. So, you know, a target. A target is a target. Target destruction, he talks about, the different target. It's the target that was forbidden to military men for 1,000 years or more, enshrined in law, and a target that American Air Force pilots up till that point, including General Hansell, regarded as immoral, wicked, evil, hitting civilians like that. But that's abstracted from. You've got to go at night, bigger bomb load, different target, different kind of war. It's a war that could be called terrorism. You could question whether it is war in a traditional sense. It's slaughter.

Now, LeMay, whom I met once, had a good picture of this, I think, in his mind. He didn't use euphemisms all the time. He says in his memoir at one point, "I tried to kill as - I tried to hit as few Red Cross hospitals and veterinarians and everything as possible," he says, jokingly, on almost the last page of his memoir. "As necessary." But what he regarded as necessary was killing people. A friend of mine named Sam Cohen at RAND liked to be known as the father of the neutron bomb, because there was this paternity competition going on in RAND physics circles. Oppenheimer was the father of the A-bomb, Teller was the father of the H-bomb. And Sam was the father of the neutron bomb, the one that destroys people without destroying buildings. Neutrons, goes through the buildings or the tanks, and kills the humans and other life, a more usable bomb, very narrow effects and so forth, but that's beside the point.

He was in favor, then, of small, targeted militarily useful bombs. He was once in a meeting with LeMay, pretty much, and somebody asked LeMay, "General LeMay, what is your requirement for a hydrogen bomb?" He said, "What requirement," meaning technical terms, how big a bomb do you need? These were physicists who were working on the bomb. He said, "One bomb for Russia." Right. And then, in that same afternoon, he said LeMay

sort of took him behind, at the edge of the room, and he said, "Sam, war is killing people. That's what it is. When you kill enough people, the other side quits."

Now, certainly even from some notion of justice in war, he wasn't totally departing from that. You didn't kill more people than you had to get the other side to quit. And he always, it's clear, to the end of his life believed, kill people fast at the beginning of the war, and the overall killing will be less. You'll lose less of your own men. You'll even kill less of them than if the war dragged on by several years. It wasn't, in other words, just a sense, I like to kill people, and this is my chance to do it. This is the way to win wars quickly, decisively, and ultimately, with the least loss of life. It's the way to do it.

In conventional bombing, that didn't prove ever to work, even in Japan, as I said. They killed the 120,000 or 80,000 in Tokyo. The war went on for five months, unabated. Okinawa is there after that. I think I said earlier, and I'm not sure I got through it, Eisenhower pointed to that, and said, "We were killing all of them in Japan, and it didn't make a damn bit of difference. It didn't affect anything." So that theory was wrong. But here's what happens now in Tokyo. They move the targets to the housing. It's going to build up. He wanted to produce a firestorm. It had only happened, I think, twice, once very recently in Dresden, just before he came over, and in Hamburg earlier. There might have been one other small place.

And a firestorm is created essentially, technically, by creating many small fires over a large area, a very large area, that spread and coalesce into one great area fire, in which case, if the weather is right, the winds begin to come into that area. There's an updraft from these fires, a big updraft, and the updraft creates lower pressure here, and the winds come in in a circle. They come in from all directions, and create like a bellows, one big fire, but a fire of extreme intensity. I've forgotten the exact figures at this moment, but it's like 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit, 1,400 degrees. In some cases, you can get close to the temperature of the Sun, though it's more the center of a fireball. But, extraordinary temperatures that you don't get

in an ordinary fire. Everything within the circle is consumed of fire, if not by fire by asphyxiation, because the oxygen is all burned up, and goes out. So, both in Dresden and elsewhere, most people died in their shelters from asphyxiation, not just from smoke.

Actually, what happened in Tokyo was a slightly different thing called a sweep conflagration. The point being, by the way, in both of these cases, what you're doing technically is creating your own weather, your own local weather. The winds are coming in. They weren't there before. They're coming in because of this temperature, and you've ~~not~~ got this thing being sent to white heat. The sweep conflagration is where the winds are coming from one direction, and they sweep this wall of flame which can be 100 feet high or higher, a wall of flame, like a wave, like a tsunami of fire, with the temperatures even higher than the firestorm. And that's what happened. They called it a firestorm in Tokyo, but actually what they got was a sweep conflagration that moves like this, and again, super-hot temperatures. To do that, though, you have to have a lot of fires started all at once, keep them up, so that they gradually come together. You don't get it right away. Gradually, the winds begin to come in, and if they come in, they may get hotter and hotter, and so forth.

So, LeMay now made several innovations in this. He had only so many planes to do it, several hundred planes. Wasn't clear that he had as many as he would have liked to do this. He had about 300 planes, roughly. He changed the tactics in about four different ways that had never been done. Normally, the planes would go up, and prepare to convoy to the target, so they'd all go together, largely to provide air support to each other with their guns, so you'd have an interlocking fire against a fighter. But that meant that the planes who went up first had to loiter for a while, and use up fuel while they waited for the other ones to come up. Couldn't all launch at once. So you used up fuel that way.

Second, of course, they were usually going up to high altitude. That used up fuel. Instead, he did several things to increase the bomb load, I think to about 10 tons, which was much

more than they normally had. They had no convoying. The planes will go in at low altitude, under 5,000 feet, individually crisscrossing over the target, not a convoy, but they will come in like this, which made them individually, in principle, more vulnerable to fighters, if there were any. But he didn't think he would get any fighters at night, on this. So he was going to take a chance now that the fighters would not be a problem. They go in low, individually.

Next, he took the guns out for more bomb tonnage. He loaded the planes with a carefully computed combination of high explosives and incendiaries, napalm and other incendiaries. And as they'd already found in Dresden and in Hamburg, one aspect was, they put delayed action bombs down, especially to the extent they could find it, in Dresden, near fire stations, which they knew on the map, but especially the delayed action bombs which would keep the fire engines from operating efficiently. As they went around, they were still subject to being blown up in various places.

So, he took the guns out. The pilots weren't told this until the night of the flight, March 9. "We're taking the guns out, and we're going in at 5,000 feet." It felt like a suicide mission. That's what all the men said. They blanched. "What is this?" You know, they were panicked. But this was LeMay. He knew what he was doing. He was their leader. They trusted him, up to a point, so far. They were very apprehensive about this. It had never been done. And I can even say, as an infantryman, I can extrapolate to the air very easily. Having a gun makes you feel that you've got some kind of protection, you know. It doesn't actually shield you. It's not really a kind of lead umbrella or something, you know, that's going to keep you safe. But you feel without it - and I've been in both positions - you feel naked. You feel as though you're out on a field of people shooting at you, and you don't have a gun, as though it were a magic wand.

My daughter at one point in Nicaragua was leading health workers for the Sandinistas. She was training the health workers, the brigadistas on the Atlantic coast. So the contras, our

contras that I paid for with my tax money were killing the brigadistas and kidnapping them. So they started carrying weapons. And so my daughter - I just heard from her son, and he heard it from his father, they're divorced now - that his mother, according to his father, a former guerilla in Nicaragua, was very good with the AK-47, a very good shot. She didn't tell me that. But I remember telling her, having been in combat myself, I said, "You know, Mary, that gun doesn't actually protect you. You know, you ought to know this. Walking with that gun in a village or something like that makes you a target, actually. It's not really a magic thing." She said, "Well, I know, Daddy. And I'll sort of feel better with this gun to hold."

Well, taking the guns out of these planes, you see, for the first time, were just, like, you know, rumplestillskin magic, defrocking them somehow. He did not know. He thought the fighters wouldn't work. He felt from studies, that the antiaircraft wasn't worth a damn at night. He thought this would work. But he said, "I didn't tell Washington because if this was a terrible failure, the worst fiasco in the history of the Air Force, and I lost, you know, a lot of planes, didn't accomplish anything, I would take the rap totally. I could say I didn't tell Washington what I was doing." That, by the way, can be taken with a grain of salt. He may or may not have told somebody, but his official position was, "I didn't officially tell anybody what I was doing on these on these tactics." So that was where he's given so much credit for bravery. He took this command decision to send his men into what could have been, like, a suicide mission, with horrible losses as at Ploesti. In fact, I think one or two planes went down, altogether. And so it was a great success and they burned something like 17 square miles of Tokyo.

I read the accounts of this in detail. I looked up and read every account I could find of it, for a reason we can go into later. But the point that stuck in my mind very much was this. The asphalt in the streets melted, and was often burning. Some people left their shelters in which they were asphyxiating, and went into the streets. They went into the streets of burning



asphalt as fast as they could, or just melted, which clogged their boots, sandals. They jumped into the canals, which crisscrossed Tokyo, like Venice. But the canals were boiling, so they boiled to death. Thousands of people boiled to death in the canals. The tactics, in other words, worked. As Freeman Dyson, who did similar work on targeting, like McNamara, for the British, talks about Hamburg, he says, “A firestorm is like a hole in one. Everything has to work right. The weather has to be right. Bomb spread has to be right.” And they basically only got it in Hamburg and Dresden and Tokyo.

I notice, by the way, that McNamara couldn’t believe the figure of 900,000 dead that you showed him for the 66, 67 cities. Do you know why it seemed implausible to him? He says, “I know we killed 100,000 in Tokyo.” He says this several times. Well, you know, you can’t have a precise figure. As I said, it’s between 80 and 120, so he had 100,000. It’s right in between 80 and 120. We, he says, killed 100,000. So, how could you kill only 800,000 more with 66 other cities? The answer is, they never got another firestorm. They went back to Tokyo again on May 15, and they killed a lot more people. But in none of the other cities could they get a firestorm, could they get this stove going, though they tried, every time. That’s what they were trying to do.

And I said I did know one person then who was involved in that. I’d studied this particular incident so much that I ran into one person. It was very startling to me, just as it’s startling to me to hear that McNamara is another person I knew who was involved. This guy is Roger Fisher, who was an advisor to my boss, McNaughton, on military things of a peculiar sort. He was a Harvard law professor, especially interested in negotiation, mediation. He wrote, with another guy, *Getting to Yes*, a number of books on negotiation. He was against the war, basically. He wanted to see it over. But he was trying to give practical ideas to McNamara, how to rein in the – it may be how to get a negotiation started. This was his role. So I knew him only in connection with peace activities, later, after the war. I shouldn’t say after the war. After the Pentagon Papers came out.

But many years later, maybe 20 years ago, I was giving a course here at Harvard, the only other time I've told all this stuff, actually. I gave a seminar, which I spent a lot of time on this kind of background. And I talked to Fisher, and he mentioned that he had been the weather officer. He'd been in Japan during the war. I didn't know he was in the service. And he said, "Yeah, I was LeMay's weather officer." I said, "Really? When?" He said, "Oh, from February till the end of the war." I said, "February? So you must have been in the headquarters for the March 9 attack." He said, "Oh, yeah, I was." And I said, "What was that like? What do you remember from that?" And he said, "Well, actually, I have a very vivid memory of that." He said, "I was in charge of the weather reporting." And he said he'd made his charts and predictions and so forth to LeMay.

And so LeMay came over and said, "What are the winds going to be like?" So he told him what the winds were like. And then he said - I think he knew by this time that it was going to be at 5,000 feet, which was unprecedented. So of course, LeMay wanted to know what the winds were like at 5,000 feet, which they didn't normally even measure. So he told him, best they could. And then he said, "LeMay asked me, 'What are they on the ground? What are the winds going to be like on the ground?'" And so he said, "I started to say, 'Well, General, we don't have any way to measure that.'" I think they did the other with balloons and reconnaissance planes and so forth. He said, "We don't even have any way to measure on the ground." He wasn't sure why the question was asked. But before he could finish saying that, LeMay said, "How fast do the winds on the ground have to be so nobody can get away from it, from the fire?" And he said, "Ah, I really don't know the answer to that, General."

And when he said it came to him in that moment,  This was the way he said it to me,  was that LeMay wanted to kill as many people as possible. Remember, up till this moment, he was the weather officer for a high level, precision bombing campaign, in which people would get

killed because he'd missed the target. And he said this was the moment, the instant, when he realized, what I'm involved in is killing as many people as possible. So I said, "What did you do, Roger?" He said, "I told him I didn't know the answer." "And what did you do?" He said, "I went back to my barracks, and I didn't follow the rest of the operation." He said, "I let my subordinates carry on from there." And I didn't ask him, actually - he must have been involved in the next 66 cities, one way or another. He didn't leave the command. And that's all I got from him. You could interview him and maybe get more. But he said he didn't want to be part of that, but of course, he was part of it. He was part of it. But it made so clear to him what LeMay wanted.

A last touch on - Actually, there's a lot more on LeMay, because of the nuclear weapons. But when I got married in 1970 to Patricia Marks^x, her father was Louis Marks^x, big toy maker, who, for reasons I could go into, had five half brothers from a later wife. Her mother died. And from the five half brothers, all had generals for godfathers. Louis Marks^x had become very friendly with these generals in the 30s, before the war. They stayed very friendly. And there's an amazing picture, actually, of the boys all being fondled on the laps of their godfathers, Dwight Eisenhower, George Marshall, Rosie O'Donnell, Curtis LeMay, and somebody else, I think Spaatz. Quite a picture.

Anyway we were about to get married, and Patricia mentioned to me one day, "By the way, you don't have any problem, do you, if General LeMay comes the wedding?" I said, "Oh no problem, but I won't be there." And I meant that seriously, but I thought she was joking. And it turned out rather recently that it hadn't been a joke. He had already been invited, and he had to be uninvited on this with some embarrassment.

Q: So, LeMay never came to your wedding.

A: He missed the wedding.

Q: I think at some point we should go back to your own personal stories. And I can start anywhere that you would want to. I mean, I suggested August 4 -

A: Okay, we could do that. I'll tell you, in this connection, then, if I could - did you read the story, I think it's on the out takes. It wasn't in the book. Maybe I didn't, because it's for the next book, but I'll tell you. Did I put in the story that something that shaped my life, about my first encounter with the nuclear weapon?

Q: I don't remember. Tell me.

A: Okay, I'll tell you. Let me go to the bathroom first.

Q: Sure.

END OF TAPE 2

A: In 1944, I was at a boys' school named Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, McNamara's old stomping ground. That's where most of the families of his auto executives at Ford lived, in Bloomfield Hills or Grosse Pointe. And most of the students I was with at Cranbrook were from those auto families in Grosse Pointe, or Bloomfield, or Birmingham. I was a scholarship student. I was on full scholarship. And I skipped the eighth grade. And in the ninth grade, in 1944, I had a social science teacher named Bradley Patterson, who was, by Cranbrook standards, quite radical. He was probably a Democrat, or a liberal now, but relatively speaking, to most of the students and their parents, and the other teachers, he was very radical.

And he had two presentations to our social studies class that made a big impression on me. One was that he told us about the incarceration of the Japanese in the camps, in the beginning of the war, and the human impact of that, and the legal impact. And he had a Nisei, second generation Japanese, who was working in our kitchen, come and lecture to us. This boy was, I remember, very tall for a Japanese. He'd been born in this country, very good-looking fellow. He'd been a college student, and had gotten out of the camps in California in order to do work in Michigan. And he told us about the experience of his family.

And we looked at that and got a very unusual slant on our society for anybody living in World War II, of any age. It was clear to us that something wrong had been done here, an unconstitutional act, a violation of these people's civil liberties given the absence of sabotage, given the absence of real threat that had turned out by that time, in '44, and a sense, very unusual, that our government was capable - our wartime government was capable of doing something unjust, or wrong, which is really extremely unusual to imagine at that time. FDR was a saint in our family, even though my father was a Republican. He'd been out of work for two years before Roosevelt came in, 1931, '32. In fact, he used to show me a picture of the Chicago skyline with an X on all the buildings he'd worked on when he was a Chicago civil engineer, structural engineer. He'd worked on nearly all the big, high-rise buildings that you could see in Chicago. But then that work totally stopped, and he had no work for two years lived on grants, really, from my mother's brother, who was a wealthy businessman. So, FDR he was very much for. And I grew up revering Franklin Roosevelt. But it was clear that Roosevelt had done something mistaken on this point.

The other point that shaped my life very much, though, was that he gave us a writing assignment one day on a subject that we were then studying, which was then very, very popular. I notice one does run into it even now from time to time. It was the idea of cultural lag. It isn't always given that term, but at that time you saw it quite a bit. And the idea was that our technological capability of mankind had outstripped progress in ethics, in politics, in

social behavior of various kinds. So there was a lag, a gap, we might have called it later, between our ability to destroy, or to fight, and our ability to control violence, and to govern ourselves.

As an illustration of that problem of technological challenge to us, he said, "There is the possibility now" - this is 1944, in the fall. "There is the possibility of a U-235 bomb, a uranium bomb. And he explained to us what that meant, that uranium 235, in particular that isotope of uranium, could fission, and in the process release neutrons that were more than what were involved in splitting it, and create a chain reaction, a process that would go faster and faster, and explode with very much more explosive power than any high explosive that was available, by a factor perhaps of 1,000 greater. And the biggest bomb at that time, of World War II, was a 10-ton bomb we heard about. What do they call it? Well, the generic term for that was blockbuster. Anything, really, more than a couple tons and up to 10 tons was called a blockbuster, because it destroyed approximately a city block of buildings. And I see by your expression, I'm talking to someone born after World War II, but that was a familiar notion at that time.

And perhaps I should - well, I'll go right on with this story first. Now, he said, "This is 1,000 times more powerful than a blockbuster. It's like 1,000 blockbusters in one bomb. The Germans had discovered fission in 1938, and presumably are working on this bomb, and so forth. Supposing such a bomb came into existence, would this be a good thing for mankind, or a bad thing, or neither, neutral. Write a paper on that." We had a week to write it. Looking back on it, ^{and} by the way a lot of people doubted my memory on this, that, you know, how could he have assigned such a thing? No one outside the Manhattan Project, which was building the bomb, which, by the way, was pretty close to the beginning of secrecy for civilians in this country. Prior to that, secrecy and classification had been for the military. The State Department didn't have it, for example, a classification system. And really, with the radiation lab working on radar at MIT, and elsewhere, and then the Manhattan Project

building the atom bomb these were the first scientists and first civilians, really, subject to clearance and to formal security procedures, and to classified material.

So, it was very secret. It was kept very secret. And so people thought, well, when I told this story, you must be wrong. He couldn't have assigned that project. Turned out later, when I read histories of the thing of the Manhattan Project, that there were four or five times during the war when a magazine, including even the *Saturday Evening Post*, a big one, had written articles based on the 1938-39 discoveries, into 1940, which was when the project went underground, basically, and they self-censored, and then they had formal censorship. And several times, people would write articles based on this early stuff, extrapolating from it on the possibilities of a uranium bomb. And each case, the authorities thought there had been a major leak from the Manhattan Project. And they went into a big spy hunt, and each time found they could find the sources for this stuff, and that it was not realized, and apparently was not picked up, as far as we know, by Germany or anything.

So we spent a week thinking about that. And I remember the substance of my essay, which was pretty much the same as everybody else's, if I recall, in the class, same conclusion. This would be a bad thing for humanity, for this to come. It wasn't put to us whether it would be a German bomb or a US bomb. In fact, as best I can remember, the assumption was it would probably come to Germany first, since they started on it first. I think that's the way we thought about it. But the focus wasn't on who had it, whether it was a good nation or a bad nation. We were really asked to think about the long run implications of this. And by '44, we certainly expected to win the war, in any case. So, whoever had it, we would have it, presumably, also.

It was clear that humanity couldn't handle an explosive that big, that compact, that it would come to a bad end, that it would be badly used. And this in the context, remember, when I had no basis for criticizing our conduct of the war, or any aspect of the war, other than

perhaps the Japanese incarceration, was the only bad thing I knew that we'd done. And it didn't kill people. It imprisoned them in concentration camps. But this was - it was just too much. That wasn't any, you know, great insight that I had. It was hard to think of it any other way. We weren't up to that. That was in late '44.

Q: Do you still have that paper?

A: I'm sorry?

Q: Do you still have that -

A: No. That would be good. I certainly don't, not that I know of. But what I have wanted - I tried to track down Bradley Patterson, and have not been able to do so, so far. I have indications that he's still living, but the school was not able to find him for me. I wrote this story up in an anniversary issue or something for the Cranbrook Alumni Bulletin, actually. They wanted a story of my Cranbrook days, and I wrote this story. And I said I'd love to talk to other members of the class, and see what they remembered of it. Because I don't recall my reaction being in any way unusual, you know, in the class. We may not have totally agreed, but there wasn't anybody who said, "Oh, this will be great. That's what we need to have."

The point being that we were among the only Americans then, at that point, this little class, and whoever else had a similar class based on other magazine articles, if there was anybody. We thought about the bomb for a week before the United States used it. And the way it came into the consciousness of every other American outside the Manhattan Project was as a bomb which was just a week or so before the end of the war. It appeared to have ended the war. It was designed by Franklin Roosevelt, the sainted Franklin Roosevelt. It was used by Americans in order to end a war, and it did end a war - it was successful - against the Japanese,

who had had the Bataan death march, and the Pearl Harbor, and all the other things, and had it coming as far as we were - most Americans were concerned.

So, the bomb was introduced to American minds in the best imaginable framework, framing, justified. If it could possibly be justified, and apparently it could, this bomb was justified. It saved a million American lives, allegedly, that would otherwise have had to invade. It ended the war, and so forth. How could you be against it? If it had come under the Germans, if they had gotten a bomb before we did, which was really the Manhattan - most of the physicists feared that in '42, '43, '44 even, it would have been very different auspices. It would not have won the war for the Nazis. I'm talking one, two, three bombs. Just one or two in terms of uranium availability is all they could conceivably have had with even with a crash program, which they didn't have. They would have had one or two bombs, or three. That would not have won the war. It might have affected the terms slightly, but probably not. Nine or ten bombs, perhaps, could have affected the terms a little. Maybe a few generals would have escaped hanging. Maybe the Nuremberg trials wouldn't have been held in the same way. It wouldn't have affected the overall course of the war. We would have won the war anyway.

So it would be a weapon used by Nazis against a city, and lost the war, not winning the war. It would have been recognized as the greatest, most dramatic of war crimes. Remember, in '44 and '45, we only had a glimmering of the Holocaust apparatus. That came out during Nuremberg, to a large extent. Most Americans weren't conscious of it. This would have been the war crime. Why a war crime? It's the destruction of a city, a whole city, indiscriminately. It goes against every notion of just war going back to St. Augustine, and almost 2,000 years.

Q: And you can't conceive -

A: There would have been a Nazi bomb.

Q: You can't conceivably argue that it's a bomb designed for military targets.

A: Yeah, yeah. Well, It would have been used against London, or wherever they could reach with a V-1 or V-2, or a plane or something. Probably wouldn't have been the US. They couldn't really reach the US. But London might well have disappeared. So, it would have been the greatest war crime in history, most obvious. They would have all been hanged, and not only the generals, and not only Hitler. The scientists who worked on it would have been hanged, the administrators. Everybody would have been hanged, and everybody would have seen justice done. And it would have been understood, this force is now loose in the world, but in a context where its true nature as the quintessential Nazi weapon of terror is unmistakable. And it would not have had the aura even of being a successful weapon. It would have shown you could lose a war after using a nuclear weapon, a demonstration the world hasn't had yet.

So, that would have been a different beginning to the nuclear era, very different. The idea of banning it from the beginning, of criminalizing it, of internationalizing and controlling every aspect, which is what the Baruch-Lilienthal plan proposed to do initially. All the production of nuclear energy for peaceful uses, all done under centralized, international control, multilateral, etc., etc., rather than as a weapon with which the country of God smote its enemies successfully, and kept us safe. Anyway, I didn't get it in that context. These 15 boys or so, we looked at it just as a weapon, not as a war-winning weapon or a US weapon, just a weapon, and said, "This is too big for this species to handle. Better that it never exists."

Okay. Nine months pass, roughly. I remember the moment in vacation in Detroit, and I have a very vivid memory of this scene. I'm standing on a street corner in August, in Detroit, downtown, and I remember a newsstand looking at me with the headlines of the paper on this

newsstand. And I can remember a trolley car going by at that moment. I just have part of the memory. A streetcar went on tracks with wires overhead. Hardly exist anymore. This is clattering by, and I'm looking at the headline, and the headline is to the effect - I don't remember the exact words - to the effect, "New Weapon, Super Bomb," something like that, "Destroys the City of Hiroshima." And I looked. It was something like 1,000 times the power of a blockbuster, in a subheading. I ought to get that paper back.

And I do remember my thoughts as I looked at that. I thought, I know exactly what that is. That's the bomb we studied last year, the uranium bomb. We got it first. And we used it on a city. And I had a feeling of very great unease at what the future might hold. It was a combined feeling that we'd done something very mistaken. And I don't think it was focused on the question that we had destroyed a city. My best memory is, this was a mistake, or more than a mistake, to usher in a new era of warfare with this attack, to set this precedent. And I also remember, within a day, hearing Harry Truman's voice, I think as soon as he returns. Remember, I read later ^{than}, when he got the news on a cruiser, I think, coming back from Potsdam, he held up the cable to the troops, the sailors, and he said, "Boys, this is the greatest thing in history." And he later said, "Greatest since the coming of Jesus Christ," something like that. "The greatest thing in history." And that was the tone of his voice, though he didn't say that, when he addressed the nation about it. And I remember feeling he sounds too celebratory on this thing. This is very, very serious. And somehow it should have been described in some kind of tone of anguish, a decision made. And it seemed that he was much too buoyant about it.

And that's the last memory I remember for a while, for a little while. And it would be very interesting to me to know how the other members of the class met that news. I've never heard of it, don't remember ever hearing. Because I would be surprised if half or more of them didn't have at least the flash of recognition. They had to. They had to know. We'd studied that bomb, and we'd studied it in a neutral context. So I would expect them to have a kind of

foreboding about it that most Americans didn't have. "Amazing technical achievement, greatest scientific achievement in history." I remember those headlines. And then the war ended, and, you know, sort of smothered this for most people. Although when you look back, a lot of individuals, commentators and others - H.V. Kaltenborn, a famous war commentator at that point - and others expressed great misgivings about the US having done this act of slaughter, in the press. And people think now, they have the impression that there was uniform rejoicing and hosannas, but really, when you look back at research on what newspapermen were saying, what others were saying, there was a lot of concern expressed, I mean, not just me. And that was on a first reaction. That was after just hearing about it.

The Mormon Church, for example, to give an unusual example, was very strong against the bomb, and always has been ever since, said it was sinful, wrong, murder. It's not the attitude one always associates with the Mormon Church, which is quite conservative politically. But they've had a consistent position on that. The Catholics were appropriately very critical from the very beginning, including the Pope. That reflected the fact that the just war tradition was of course a Catholic tradition originally, and for almost 2,000 years. And one could argue about whether this or that was a just war, or a just means. The Catholics were very clear that this was not a just means. This was deliberate destruction of noncombatants. And Catholics, again, with all their conservatism, recognized - I won't make a link here, but I'm sure they didn't realize right away that the Catholic population of Nagasaki had just been wiped out. But that didn't get referred to, I ever heard at the time. But they were strongly - anybody who is connected with just war thinking, this is not acceptable means in warfare.

Well, later, my father told me - well, can I take a minute and bring my father into this?

Q: Sure.

A: My father spent the war making bombers, essentially, or, I should say, building plants for bombers to be built on an assembly line. He was a structural engineer. He'd been a civil engineer in Nebraska, building bridges and things. Then he was a structural engineer, working on all these high-rise buildings in Chicago. Then we moved from Chicago, I moved when I was about five, during the Depression still, to Springfield, Illinois, home of Abraham Lincoln, and then to Detroit, where he had a job with Albert Kahn a very large, one of the largest in the world, engineering firms. And the first really good job he had - well-paying job - was this. He was competing with, as a structural engineer, with a flood of émigrés from Germany. ~~Pardon me~~, Austria, Italy. Jews, kicked out by Hitler, or escaping from Hitler, many of whom had Ph.D.s. Almost no American engineer had a Ph.D. in those days. They went to work, and they learned on the job after their training.

But these people were very highly trained, and highly skilled, and were émigrés. And so the market was very, very low for a structural engineer, even coming out of the Depression. So I don't think he ever earned more than about \$4,000 dollars a year until the war started. I remember Pearl Harbor day. That's another story. Then he got the job of being chief structural engineer of the Ford Willow Run plant - this is as a structural engineer, now - which was a plant built to build, I believe, B-24 bombers, which was the largest bomber until the B-29, which was still larger. And they were building these on assembly lines. I think in the McNamara movie, you showed the assembly lines that got America back to work with the war, and they were building tanks. And I think there was one that showed planes coming down an assembly line. That could have very well been my father's Willow Run plant, because I imagine it was the first plant that actually built planes on an assembly line.

And he took me there a couple times to watch this process. When it was done, I would see, you know, planes coming down on hooks, moving down this line with people riveting and hammering and polishing, and doing everything. I'll tell you one funny feature that he showed me. The plant is a mile and a quarter long. A mile and a quarter under one building.

He said it was the largest building under one roof in the world at that time, and he was chief structural engineer, not chief engineer, if there was such a thing. There was mechanical and electrical and so forth, but he was in charge of the structure.

So, this plant^e went for 3/4 of a mile straight on this line, hanging from hooks. Then it was then was lowered on a turntable, turned 90 degrees to go the rest of the half mile. It was a mile and a quarter long. Why this? It would have been better to have one long line the whole way, instead of having to lower it down and pick it up again. The reason was, he said, that they had discovered in the course of building it that they were about to go out of one country, Wayne county or something, which they owned, essentially, into the adjacent county, which Ford didn't own from top to bottom and the political machinery. So to keep it all in one county, they had to turn half a mile of it at right angles. Then when it would get to the end of the half mile at the bottom, it would taxi out to an airfield, be filled with gas, and fly off to a base somewhere, wherever, very impressive process. Later, he was in charge of the Dodge cargo^{aircra} plant, also an aircraft plant which was much larger than Willow Run. So that was now the biggest building under one roof in the world, and he was chief structural engineer on that. So, for the first time, he was getting some pretty good wages on this.

And it was bombing, but that didn't have a bad ring to me at that point. These were American bombers. My introduction to bombing was in grade school, where we were shown newsreels of bombing raids over Britain, to motivate us to take very seriously the pails of sand that were in each room. Every room had a bucket of sand and a little shovel. And that was to deal with the incendiary bombs, and we were shown - it was interesting to handle these little magnesium bombs. They were cylinders about like this, which, we were told, would burn with an intense flame, the Nazis dropped, and they could not be put out by water. The water would sputter or I don't know. They showed us a demonstration of this on the film. But anyway, the water wouldn't put them out. It would feed it if anything. And you had to smother it with sand.

So each room in every - And here we are in the middle of the country in Detroit, with these pails of sand to deal with. And we did fire drills, and air raid drills. I mean, we had air raid watchers on every block, and we had air raid curtains, and a warden, a marshal or a warden or something would go around the block on air raid drills and see whether any light was showing. This was all part, apparently, of mobilizing us for the war, ^{for} the chance of a plane getting to Detroit. You know, getting ^{from} to the coast, you know, was like zero. But they talked about coming down through Canada or something. But it was to keep us interested, you know, and assured that we were part of the war effort. You know, we were saving cans, and we had a victory garden. We did have a victory garden actually, raised radishes, [laughter] very, very well. We could have lived on my radishes. Corn, stuff like that.

Q: Why a victory garden?

A: For food, you know, the home front. To save food for the boys up there. You've never heard of a victory garden?

Q: No.

A: Don't know victory garden? Now, all everybody knows is freedom fries, and stuff like that. But this is a victory garden. The reason I remember the radishes is that they seemed to grow better than anything else that I grow under my red thumb.

So we were all part of this war effort. But we were facing this demonic enemy which used magnesium bombs, the innards of which could not be put out by water, and which, if they went on your skin, would burn through to the bone. You couldn't put it out, essentially. And to me, that epitomized the Nazis that we were fighting. This was Battle of Britain we're talking about here, the blitz, earlier Rotterdam. People would devise a weapon that would

design to burn through human flesh to the bone, that couldn't be put out, civilians. And that's who we were fighting. So the idea of bombers that would help us win the war, and the newsreels had cartoons - I remember Detroit was the arsenal of democracy. The tanks were going out, convoys of planes going over the ocean, you know, to help win the war.

I don't recall being conscious of the fact that we - the British, and then we - were adopting the incendiary bombs. I think napalm came in in 1945. It was used in Okinawa. In fact, I was just reading today, in a book that Adam showed me. LeMay, discussing with Dave Burchinal, later the director of the Joint Staff, and an air force general - I actually dealt with Burchinal in the Pentagon, in a friendly way, professional way. And Burchinal was recalling that on Okinawa, they had to experiment with the use of napalm against the Japanese, who had dug into rock embankments, you couldn't get at them. And he said, "We had to experiment, and we found that we had to drop unfused napalm into the cave, at the entrance of the cave, so that the napalm would seep into the cave." It's jellied gasoline. It was invented by a chemist at Harvard, named Louis Fieser. And there is now, in the Harvard Yard, a building, Fieser Hall, for the inventor of napalm.

And the napalm and this jellied gasoline, jellied so that it would not go out quickly, and it would ^{be set by} light the magnesium, would burn through to the bone. Napalm makes peculiar scar tissue, burning. You can tell a napalm victim, which I saw in Vietnam. So, you do it unfused so that it would seep into the cave, and then drop incendiaries, like magnesium bombs on it to light it, so that the flame would go into the cave. So, you know, by trial and error, the American can-do spirit, and the spirit of Edison and so forth, we did work out these ways of creating firestorms, and burning people.

And actually, I looked up *Time* and *Newsweek* for the week of the March 9-10 raid, and to see how it was handled in our mass media. And the story was - I can pretty well remember the opening sentence. "Last week General LeMay proved the air force thesis that properly

kindled Japanese cities would burn like autumn leaves.” And on the same series of articles, there was an article about the use of flame-throwers on, I think then, Iwo Jima, and said, “We burned them out like rats in the caves,” so forth. Actually, that was the only mention of the March 9-10, no actual casualty figure for the thing. Just burning the cities like autumn leaves, which had been the air force dream, as I say, since the early 20s. So, the point was, I did not have a sense that the US was using this kind of tactic. I don’t remember anything of it. I don’t remember anything about Japan, reading about it at the time. And I say, the tactics weren’t used only in Japan. We had begun to do that in Germany as well, as the British had been doing right along.

So my father, at the end of the war, was given the job of being chief ^{structural} engineer at a firm called Giffels & Villay, later Giffels & Rossetti. And he was chief structural engineer on the largest engineering project in the world at that time. And that was the building up of the Hanford, Washington uranium processing plants. And I remembered his doing that. He was made chief engineer. He’d switched firms on that for a year and a half. And then he left for a couple of years. I guess it was maybe several years, four years, probably. And here’s how I heard the story, maybe 40 years later, of why he’d left. Uh, he was in his 80s at that point, and I said to him, “Dad, once, why” - this was in the 1980s, or, let’s see. He was born in 1889. And he died when he was 96. No, I know when this was. It was in about 1978. So he was 88.

So, I said, “Dad, how did you happen to leave DuPont?” DuPont had the overall contract for the Hanford buildup. And the engineering part was done by this Giffels & Rossetti firm. He said, “They wanted me to build a bomb - a plant for a bomb that would be 1,000 times bigger than the A-bomb.” He said, “The H-bomb.” And I said, “Dad, when was that exactly?” He said, “1949.” And he said, “I didn’t want to do that. I didn’t want to do that.” He said, “When I joined DuPont, I had the impression I’d be working on nuclear power, nuclear energy. But I quickly learned that after I joined them, that what they were

producing was material for an A-bomb. And that made me very uneasy, but I figured, well, Einstein had been in favor of this, and it won the war, and so forth. Perhaps we did need it against the Russians, or something like that, so perhaps that was a necessary thing to do.”

He said, “But in ‘49, fall of ‘49, they asked me to go to this plant for a bomb that would be 1,000 times bigger.” I said, “That was the H-bomb.” He said, “Yeah. And I didn’t want to do that.” He said, “I came back. I told them I wouldn’t do it.” And he said, “I came back to the office, and I said to my assistant, ‘These guys are crazy. They have an A-bomb. Now they want an H-bomb. They’re going to go right through the alphabet until they have a Z-bomb.’” I said, “Well, Dad, they’ve only reached N.” That’s how I can place the time of this. It was the year of the neutron bomb that Carter was going to send to Europe, which I was spending all my time demonstrating against, or acting, doing civil disobedience at Rocky Flats. “Well, a neutron bomb. They’ve got an N-bomb, Sam Cohen’s bomb, Sam Cohen’s baby is the neutron bomb.”

So I said, “Well, what - what made you so hesitant, so - Why did you react that way?” Oh, no. First I asked him - Sorry. First I asked him, “Dad, you’ve got to have the year wrong. You couldn’t have known about this in ‘49,” because I’d studied - Again, I’d studied this whole decision making a great deal, hydrogen bomb. I said, “Forty-nine, the fall, only people who knew about that was the general advisory commission the GAC of the atomic energy agency.” They were deciding whether to do a crash program on the H-bomb.”

And by the way, Oppenheimer, father of the A-bomb - James Conant, who was over the Manhattan Project, he was the president of Harvard, but in his spare time, or actually, most of his time, he ran the Manhattan Project, along with other scientific projects. He had been president of Harvard when I went to Harvard, and I was in his section in a course called Natural Sciences 4, Nat. Sci. 4. He lectured in this course, and he also gave a ~~RAND~~ 1

section, that is, small group, working group. And I was in his section. I was one of the few freshmen in that.

So, here was Conant. What I now had learned studying it was - that was the fall of '48 - that in just three years before that, he had been the advisor on the advisory council who said to Stimson, Secretary of War, that the ideal target for the A-bomb would be a factory. It wasn't. But, a factory closely surrounded by workers' housing. That was the president of Harvard, when he said that. And actually, they didn't bother to target a factory. They just targeted the housing.

But the year of '49, when I was a sophomore, after I'd taken the course, he was in Washington arguing against a crash program on an H-bomb, as did Oppenheimer, very strongly, as did Fermi and Szilard. Not Szilard, but Fermi and Rabi. Four members of the Manhattan Project. And their argument was - we have it in writing. This is a weapon - this is Fermi and ^{Rabi} Robby - of genocide, a word that was fairly new at that time. A weapon of genocide. It can only be used for mass extermination. And it has the seeds in it, the possibility of destroying life, destroying civilization. We don't need it, because we have the A-bomb, sufficient for any military or deterrent needs that are possible. This is just too big. They were looking at that before it had been used, the way I looked at the A-bomb in 1944. At that time, they were all hot to see their weapon tested and used. It was their bomb. But after that had happened, they weren't eager to go 1,000 times greater. They were overruled, ultimately, by Truman, and the program went ahead. But they had advised against it.

The point here, though, was I said to my father, "Well, Dad, how could you have known about it? This was a subject then of controversy, whether to have such a program, in '49, in the GAC." And he said, "Well, I was the logical person to do this for structural engineering. I had just done it at Hanford, and I was the logical person." I said, "This must have been Savannah River?" And he said, "Yeah, I think that, Savannah River, Georgia." And he said,

“And I had the clearances, so I did know about it.” I said, “Well, how come you were the one who turned it down? Did anybody else turn it down?” He said, “No, not that I know of.” “Why you?” And my Republican father, you know, and so forth.

He said, “You did.” I said, “What gave you the thought, changed your mind, so you wouldn’t do it?” He said, “You did.” I said, “What do you mean, Dad. What are you talking about? I didn’t know anything about this.” And he said, “No. In 1946, the year after the war, you came home one day,” when he already had the job-. He said, “You came home one day with a book in your hand, and you were crying. And you said it was about Hiroshima. And you said, ‘Dad, you’ve got to read this. It’s the worst thing I’ve ever read.’” And I said, “That was the Hersey book?” And he said, “Yeah.” So, he read that. He said, “I read it, and at that point, I became very uneasy about what I was doing. And when it came to the H-bomb I couldn’t do it.”

He was out of work, by the way, for a year totally out of work. He’d been chief structural engineer. He left work. He was going to work for my uncle again, selling pre-stressed concrete a new invention, kind of, a new kind of form for it. Anyway, he was taken back at the same firm a year later as chief engineer, chief structural engineer, and told, “We’ve dropped the contract with DuPont.” I’m not clear why. But he said, “We’re not doing atomic business anymore.” He was chief engineer for many years after that. But he had been out of work for a year.

I said, “Dad, how come I never heard any of this before.” This is 40 years later. He said, “I couldn’t tell my family any of this. You weren’t cleared for it. You didn’t have a clearance. Ironically, I did have a clearance [laughter] as of 1960, somewhere around there. I got a Q clearance, which is for - it’s a little later. I think that was ‘64. When I was a special assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense, I had 12 clearances higher than top secret. I had all the special clearances my boss had, and one of them was a Q clearance for atomic energy issues.

I could get into bomb design or stockpile figures and so forth. I don't remember using it, particularly. But anyway, for years I had had that clearance, and he could have told me. But he finally told me that.

Q: What are the 12 levels?

A: Well, you're interested in that? That's an important subject. You have a lot of film here?

Q: Maybe I don't want to ask the question. I have to be very careful.

A: No, it's really a significant point. Let me think for one second where we are. That covers my background. Well, I should mention one thing for transition at some point, from this. We've left the story now in 1946, essentially, with the Hersey book. But at that point, I had the thought that preventing nuclear war was the most important thing that this species had to face, humanity, mankind, as we called it then, had to face. But some years went by -

Q: Oh, we just have to stop for one second.

A: Sure.

A: You know, if we're going to have another day, at least, you want to get into Vietnam someday.

Q: Vietnam does seem to be a relevant subject, yes.

A: Nuclear is much more associated with it than you probably know, or anybody knows. It's more of a nuclear dimension, although I didn't realize it fully at the time. So, all this does bear on Vietnam eventually. There's also the question of the clearances, which is an

interesting question. The Cuban missile crisis, where I'm prepared to tell you now how - what really won the crisis for it, which McNamara doesn't know, apparently, from his account, and which is not surprising. Almost nobody does know. That was going to be a centerpiece of my book, to explain this, if people still remember the Cuban missile crisis. And actually, there is a lot of interest in it still, as you know. Books keep coming out on it. I studied that for a year, with several clearances higher than top secret, '64, '65, which gave me information that has never come out, essentially and especially from talking to Bobby Kennedy, which was crucial.

I think people don't understand how that crisis ended, and why Khrushchev backed down, to this day, and what lessons are to be drawn from it. Although the lessons that McNamara drew are very, very pertinent, and even profound, whether they sound that way or not. The notion that only luck kept us from blowing the world up, the northern hemisphere, is absolutely right. The world did hang by that string. It was luck. It was luck that it didn't blow up at that point. And the significance he gives to that is not exaggerated in the slightest, the lessons to be drawn from it. But he still doesn't know exactly all the luck, I think, that was involved. So that's a story.

But I suggest, why don't we try to go on? We're just doing one more tape this evening?

Q: Well, it's up to you.

A: Well, I'll tell you what. I'm drinking green tea here, now. So you're about to see a Jekyll and Hyde transformation before your very camera.

Q: There's so many questions. I can tell you some of them.

A: Sure, do.

Q: One of the things that just -

A: I can't hear you very well.

[non-interview conversation]

Q: What interests me is, given that paper that you wrote in high school, at Cranbrook, and given your father's own feelings - Maybe he couldn't express them directly, but my guess is that he expressed them in some way.

A: Although, by the way, I have simply no memory of that at all. You see, I was away at school, and then at Harvard. Well, let's see. In '49, I was at Harvard. I wasn't seeing much of him. So, I was away from home. I didn't really know much about it at the time. Of course, in '46, I was at home. But even then, I was at school except in the summers.

Q: What interests me is how you became involved. I mean, I'm not clear about the sequence of events, the interest in economics, game theory, and how then that -

A: Yeah, how I got at RAND, how I was doing war plans. Of course. That's the natural thing to tie into what we've been talking about all now. Shall I go into that?

Q: Sure. That would be fantastic.

A: See, it's an intense, you could say, kind of irony. I'm not exaggerating my feeling against nuclear weapons, about the horror of nuclear weapons in the late 40s. But, you know, I can't remember thinking about it much when I was in the Marines, when I was at Harvard. I doubt if it came up at all, really, until I was out of the Marines in '57, went back to Harvard,

society fellows. I was a junior fellow at Harvard, and was able to work there on whatever I wanted. It was the dream fellowship in the country. You got the pay of an assistant professor. You had an office and absolutely no obligations whatever. You could really do whatever you wanted at that point. You could take courses, but not for credit at all. It wasn't for courses. And in those days, you didn't write a thesis. You were encouraged not to write a thesis, not to get bound up in this grubby, narrow academic focus, but to really work on - they liked people who were in odd, esoteric disciplines, or who were interdisciplinary in some way. And you could do whatever you want. You could travel for a year if you wanted. It was a marvelous arrangement.

And, actually, I'd given that up to stay in the Marine Corps an extra year because I foresaw the Suez crisis coming. Do you want me to do any byways, or try to keep focused on what -

Q: No, go on. I'm listening.

A: Well, it so happens, I was just giving a lecture in Utah, and somebody came up who said that she was the daughter, the stepdaughter, of Joe Alsop. And that had a lot of resonance for me, because Joe Alsop kept me in the Marines for an extra year. He and Stewart Alsop, just when I was due to get out of the Marines in the summer of 1956, wrote a series of columns that there was going to be war in the Middle East over Suez. Nasser had just nationalized the Suez Canal, and he said there's going to be war. My battalion was due to go to the Mediterranean for solaced Medication cruise, six months with the Sixth fleet, actually. And what they were going to be the duty battalion in the Mediterranean, so if there was war over Suez, my battalion would be involved. I'd been a company commander. I'd been the battalion operations officer in charge of training for the men. So I couldn't stand the thought that I'd be back at Harvard as of July, and I might be reading in the papers that my troops were in combat, the people I'd trained as a platoon leader, company commander, and training officer. So, I wired commandant Marine Corps and asked to stay in for another year,

or the duration of this Med cruise. And I did, I went with them. Now, how'd I get into that? Anyway, I came back -

Q: About Joe Alsop.

A: I know. No, I was about to go into the society of fellows. So I wrote them, actually, and I asked that I would have to postpone that. And they called back and said, "You can't postpone it. You have to give it up. But you could reapply." It was a three-year fellowship, by the way. So I did give it up. And in the end, I did reapply, when I came back from the Med cruise, and I got in. They took me as if I'd started in the fall, so I missed half a year of it. But I wasn't assured that I'd get back in.

I came back then and was working on decision theory probability theory, subjective probability, the measurement of uncertainties by means of betting odds, hypothetical betting odds. This is two to one, in my opinion, you know, my judgment, kind of shot. It's more esoteric than that may sound, but that's the essence of it. And game theory, bargaining theory, the theory of conflict in adversarial things. And I quickly learned that there was a place called the RAND Corporation, which specialized in this, in their mathematics department, and their economic department. So it sounded good. And I didn't know much about RAND at all, other than that, that they hired people who were interested in that subject.

So, I was in the West Coast, the summer of '57, went in Stanford, actually, doing a course in mathematical probability at Stanford. And I went down at the end of the summer and visited RAND. And that's another story. But it made a very good impression on me. And I made a good impression on them. Actually, though they did work on that subject, they didn't hire too many people. That was the birthplace of it, to a large extent. It was sort of an in house kind of subject. And I was an unusual person to have come from outside with that interest. And so they offered me then a summer fellow - I forget what the word was. It wasn't intern

or fellow. Summer consultant, I guess it was called, for a three-month deal the next summer, '58.

Now, as I recall - I'd have to check on this - I was there in about September, and I think it was October that *Sputnik* went up, the Russian *Sputnik*, putting a football-sized satellite into space. RAND, by the way, had done the first study in this country, a classified study, of an earth girdling space satellite, back in the late 40s, one of its very first reports, the kind of thing they did. I didn't learn too much about them in the visit, but the next summer when I came, then, the country was all focused on the implications of *Sputnik*, because it implied that they could put up an ICBM, an intercontinental ballistic missile, which could be targeted on the US, a transcontinental, intercontinental missile, and with fair accuracy, because that showed they had the accuracy to put something into orbit, which meant they could put something back onto the surface of the earth.

Now, we were working on that too, as that was openly known. The Atlas and the Titan were going to come later. So the implication was the Russians were going to have this first, an ICBM first. Incidentally, there again there was a series of critical Alsop articles, as far as I was concerned. Alsop was one of the first to be warning about what he called an IBM, an intercontinental ballistic missile. And it was known as an IBM. If you're really an old-timer, you'll remember the name IBM, except that of course there was a corporation that objected to that particular acronym. So it became an ICBM. Just as when I worked for a while at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard, it was originally, of course, known as CIA. And for some reason, they decided to change it to CFIA, for International Affairs.

And so Alsop was warning about the implications of an IBM, which could, you know, wipe us out, essentially, on 30-minute flight time. And that made a strong impression on me before I went to RAND that summer. I had one year left to go, now, in the society of fellows, the following year, '58-'59. And that summer was very powerful effect on me, period in my life.

because of that summer that I, this person who was abhorrent of the idea of nuclear weapons at all, and of our having anything to do with nuclear weapons, came to be involved in helping design nuclear war plans, and preparing plans for striking Russia under certain conditions, which would seem to be the greatest imaginable kind of irony, to put a nice face on it, or sellout, to put another face. But in a way, it was neither of those. What it came to at RAND was the height, actually, at that moment, of what Alsop had called the missile gap. In fact, as this stepdaughter reminded me, I think, he took credit for inventing the name, missile gap. The idea being that there would be a period where the Soviets would be far ahead of us in intercontinental ballistic missiles, and would be able to destroy us, in effect, in a way that we could not retaliate or match.

And when I got to RAND, I think at first I did not have a secret clearance - I mean, I did not have a top secret clearance. I had a provisional top secret, which meant, however, I think I had to be escorted in most of the areas of RAND. We were in a particular part of RAND where interim people were. But eventually I got at least an interim top secret, and could then go anywhere in RAND, except for the physics division, which was sealed off from the rest behind a separate, guarded door because those people all had Q clearances, which is the Atomic Energy Commission clearances for nuclear data, which I didn't get until, as I say, I think '64. But only the physicists had that at RAND, so they had their own enclave.

But the rest of us could wander in and out of each other's offices, and almost nothing we dealt with was top secret. It was nearly all secret. There was confidential, secret, and top secret. We saw very little top secret at RAND. It was nearly all secret. The top secret had to be signed in at RAND. If you saw a top secret document, there would be a cover sheet on it at which you'd sign your name, showing that you had received this, and then you'd sign it out when you got rid of it. Very few people had top secret safes, ^{in their office,} ~~Most of the docs interoffice,~~ just a handful. I did come to have one. At the time of the Pentagon Papers, I was one of the few who had those.

Q: How does it feel to get top secret clearance?

A: Oddly, I had once gotten top secret clearance before that. Marines never see top secret, for ^a good approximation. In fact, we dealt with hardly anything higher than confidential in the Marines, as a Marine lieutenant. Once in a while, maybe something secret. We were infantry officers, you know. Our infantry tactics went back to Alexander, or somewhere, I guess. But there were certainly 100 years or more. And there wasn't anything very secret about them. But when I was in the Mediterranean, the Suez crisis did break. And we sailed for the southeast corner of the Mediterranean with the assumption that we would somehow be involved on one side or the other. It wasn't clear which.

Now, one of our main tasks - we were only a battalion, a reinforced battalion. We couldn't do much in the way of invading. But we were supposed to take off out of one country or another all the American civilians, the tourists, or officials, in case of war. And there was some thought that the country in question, Egypt or Israel, might object to our doing that. They might want those tourists as hostages, in effect, or officials, to protect them from bombing. And we might have to use forceful measures to help get them out, make a show of force of some kind, or actually make a raid, in effect, into the country with a landing, an opposed landing, to have a beachhead, and get people out. That part of it wasn't well thought through, as far as I could see.

But I was on the command ship. I was an assistant operations officer at that point. So I was given the job of preparing a landing plan for Haifa. And the man next to me [laughter], I learned, because I met for the first time just two days ago. Two days ago, a guy came up to me who served under me on this ship, on the S-3. I haven't seen another Marine fellow from my command in, when was that? Fifty-seven. I haven't seen one since '57. And he came up, and reminded me that he had served with me and ^{Charlie} Sholly Coleman, the other assistant

operations officer. Well, Coleman, at the other desk, was making a landing plan for Alexandria, and I was making one for Haifa. And for that purpose, we were both given, immediately, top secret clearance. And this guy, who had been a sergeant at the time - in fact, at that time, a corporal - he said to me, "Yeah, I was given top secret," in answer to your question. He said, "For the first time, we saw top secret war plans of the Sixth fleet." Because like any plans, we would base our plan on the higher levels of command, their plan. So, I got to see the Sixth fleet war plans, and to make my plan.

One little footnote does bear on this. It's the kind of thing McNamara was telling, that it's relevant to the fog of war. I was used to making landing plans at that point, as an operations officer. I'd participated in probably 100 landings in exercises, in maneuvers. And in fact, I had loaded up an LST - I won't go into all that - for purposes of the Med cruise, where you have to have everything in the right order so you can get at it when you need it, you know, when you offload it. And, so I was looking at the plan, the map for Haifa that I'd been working with. And initially, I was working with a very small plan, and kind of in a book, an atlas kind of thing. And then I had a somewhat larger plan to work with. But the somewhat larger one didn't seem large enough.

And so I asked the map sergeant, who I thought might turn out to be this guy, but he wasn't. "Get me a large scale map of Haifa, so I can decide where to put the different platoons and so forth when we go in, in the harbor. So I started working on that, and deciding, you know, where the loiter points would be, reconnoiter, where we'd move in. I remember there was a pier standing out, doing something about placing the platoons in connection with this pier. And the big map had a pier, but it didn't seem to be in the same location as the little map I was looking at. Different scale. So I looked hard at it to see if, just a trick of scale. No, it really didn't look the same. So then I looked closely at the heading on the map, and it said, "Jaffa." Jaffa. Hmm, maybe that's the Hebrew/Israeli spelling of Haifa. Never heard of Jaffa. So, I looked at it some more, and I thought, it can't be the same.

I looked up in the index, and it said, no, there was a Jaffa and there was a Haifa. They used two different places. So I said to the map sergeant, "Uh, I need a map of Haifa. This is Jaffa. Get me the map for Haifa." He said, "Sure, what's the number of it." I said, "Well, how would I know the number of it? Just get me a map for Haifa." He said, "Well, that's impossible." "What do you mean, impossible?" So he looked at this huge rack of rolled-up maps on the side of the bulkhead. He says, "I'd have to look through every one of those to find it." And I remember thinking for just seconds. The fantasy went through my mind of explaining to the battalion after the operation, "Well, I'm sorry, this wasn't quite right map I was working on, but my map sergeant would have had to go through every map to get it exactly right, to get the right city," you know, and so I said, "Well, you'll just have to do that," you know, using my command presence, always worrying, of course, that insubordination may be the next step. [laughter] He went through all the maps, and he found me a map of Haifa.

And on my one visit to Israel, in the mid 90s, I remember we went to the port of Haifa. And on the visit, I was looking out. I saw the pier and everything, you know, where we would have been landing, and thinking to myself, hmmm, I wonder how I would have come out. We actually always assumed that if we had to land against Israel, we'd be slaughtered. This wasn't the best battalion I was associated with. We'd been at sea for months, ^{on} firing exercise, ^{on} All the firing pins were broken. No training was going on. I was sending out training schedules, as the operations officer, every week. So many hours of drills, so many hours of small unit tactics, field sanitation whatever. Every hour was scheduled on the day, to about the six or seven ships in our flotilla.

And I discovered, by visits to the other ships, that none of this was happening. They were sending in reports every week of fulfilled, checked off all the training they had done. And none of it, none of it was being done. On our command ship, actually, we were doing a

certain amount, because I was there. But this was a preparation for Vietnam, actually. That image came back to me later in Vietnam, as you may have read in my book, when I tried to find Vietnamese patrols that were going out at night, you know - that's another story. Too far afield. But anyway, it was very like the training. None of these patrols were happening. They were on the map. They were reported. They were calculated in statistics. And no one was going out at night, at all, which was a very reminiscent feeling for me, from the Mediterranean.

But there we were, then, going to Alexandria. If we went into Alexandria, we figured we'd cut through the Egyptian forces. You know, this is a reinforced battalion. But if we had to go against the Israelis, we figured we'd be slaughtered. But the question was we didn't know which it would be. The president would decide which side we were on in this war. And that's fine. That seemed absolutely natural at that point. Bullets are bullets. Tactics are about the same. So, we were the president's men. We fought where the president told us to fight. President decides whether to go to war, when to go to war. How did I get into - I got off on that.

Q: No, it's an interesting question. Did that disturb you in any way?

A: Looking back?

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, no. Of course, obviously, I'm telling a story. That epitomizes the change in my thinking that took place. See, that was '57 by about '67, only 10 years later. It seems a short time, from my present perspective, of 72. ^{Twelve} Ten years later, in '67, I'd learned that it should not be up to the president to decide that by himself, that Congress should have a crucial role, and the whole question of international law, the Constitution, were very involved

in whether you went to war, how you went to war, and who decided. And the notion that it was for the president to decide altogether was something that I had learned.

By now, I'd been in a real war. I'd watched the Suez war, to a certain extent, but ¹²~~10~~ years later, I'd been in a war for two years, and it was clear to me that this disaster, this debacle was strongly due to the fact that Congress had delegated all its responsibilities to the president, and so forth, and that it had allowed him to believe, as George Bush used to say last year, one year ago, about 2002, about going into Iraq, "I have not decided yet. I will decide when." A lie, in any case. He had decided, it's now clear. But aside from that, even if he really hadn't decided, no one was standing up to challenge him, to say, "Boss," or, "Mr. President, you don't get to decide that. The Constitution says Congress decides that, unless we're under attack," - which we manifestly weren't - "or about to be attacked, which is a gray area, the really preemptive case where an attack is almost underway or is underway. You could decide then. It's not yours to decide whether we go to war when we're not under imminent attack, at all. Under the Constitution, the president doesn't even share in that decision. It's not with the consent of the Senate. The Senate and the House decide on that." Essentially, nobody said that.

But I noticed it, and I'm saying, I wouldn't have noticed it when I was a 26-year-old Marine in there. It didn't occur to me that it was not for the president to decide. Actually, I totally backed Harry Truman's decision to go into Korea. I was at Harvard at that point, as an undergraduate. It didn't occur to me that Robert Taft, the archetypical reactionary conservative Republican, who I mainly associated with the Taft-Hartley act, an antiunion act - and I was studying to be a union economist at that point. So, Taft was a very dark figure, as far as I was concerned. And when Taft said in 1950 that when the president sent troops into Korea, against aggression, in a limited war, but without any consultation with Congress, he was acting unconstitutionally, that this was setting a precedent that would have terrible consequences, and that Congress should not allow it, just what Senator Morse said in 1964,

Senator Gruening, about the Tonkin Gulf resolution, and what Senator Byrd said last year and this year about the latest Tonkin Gulf resolution. It's a blank check to the president. It's unconstitutional. Congress has no power, no authority, to turn over its authority to the president to use as he sees fit. And doing it is very dangerous.

But, most senators did it, did turn over that. Most House members did turn it over, just like Tonkin Gulf. Senators Byrd and Kennedy were the only two members of the Senate who had been around for Tonkin Gulf, '64, almost 40 years earlier.

Q: I just lost an image here. Stop for a second.

Q: Part of the problem seems to me that in the postwar period, the whole power of the presidency has changed, primarily because of nuclear weapons. The fact that nuclear weapons are in the mix has changed everything. A theory. It's my theory.

A: Well, it's a good theory, but you know, that's used more as a legitimization, as a rationale for the shift to executive power. Are we on?

Q: Yes.

A: It provides the notion that in the nuclear age you have to respond so quickly, in such a coordinated manner, that only the President can make that decision in time. Of course, the IBM, the ICBM, seems to make that very drastic. It lands on a target 30 minutes after it's sent off. And you know, that's the time you have available for decision as to what to do about it, preferably before it lands. So some period after you've detected it and before it lands, a decision has to be made. And the idea is that only the President could - Congress obviously can't be involved in that period. But again, remember, we're talking about a preemptive

attack, or launching. We're under attack. It's not a crisis situation, in theory. Actually, some missiles have actually already landed, supposedly, preferably not on the President.

In fact, and this is something I'll come back to, very importantly for then and now. There is no way to assure, or even make likely that the President will survive the first stage, the very first stage of a nuclear attack. So the chance that the President could give that order is minimal, almost negligible. The notion that the President needs, must have, and does have the capability to respond by himself is a myth.

To really make the system work that way would be to assure that we had no retaliatory capability. One explosion - well, actually, one well-placed pistol shot, but better, an explosion that takes out Washington, most of Congress, nearly all the Cabinet members, certainly the President, would paralyze our retaliatory force. In the words of RAND or the Pentagon, that would be an invitation to attack, almost a provocation. How could a country that had nuclear weapons forego the chance to have a monopoly on nuclear weapons by eliminating the US ability to reply?

It never has been the case, and never will be the case, that only the President can send those forces off. And that applies to India, Pakistan, Israel, Russia, Britain, France, and any other country that will acquire those weapons. The button will always be at more hands than that of the elected head of state, and that of the head of the armed forces. Those are too easily eliminated. If you want to have the ability to retaliate, you have to delegate that to some extent. And every country that we know of - and there's a lot we don't know - I can assume that every country that does this has taken the gambles, the chance, of false alarm, of unauthorized action, that the US has always taken.

Q: But doesn't the knowledge, if you are the President of the United States, doesn't the knowledge that you can press a button and destroy the world create a dislocation, some

psychological dislocation about who you are, and what you're allowed to do, and what the role that you have as President - doesn't that become distorted as a result?

A: It has to have an effect on people of a kind that never existed before. It's an exaggeration of effects that monarchs and emperors have had. "I command these armies. I am the ruler of the seas." Whatever they feel, many titles before, the force they can command, going back to, let's say, a Genghis Khan or an Alexander. But this one is the notion, I can pick up that phone. I can press - it's not a button, usually. But I can pick up this phone, and I can end life in the northern hemisphere, let's say, within minutes, does have a distorting effect.

One of the effects - first, it will accentuate any degree of megalomania, grandiosity, paranoia, that the individual may have to start with. And an individual who runs, who goes through the process of running for President of the United States of America for a number of years, or for half his lifetime, is almost sure to have some psychological peculiarities. He's not exactly like you or me. And having that button will not make him more healthy psychologically in any particular way.

But it also has to have this effect: If there's been a President who believes that his political rival would make a better President than he would, that one doesn't come to my mind. I've never heard of one. Typically, they look at the field of their opponents, and they don't have to think they themselves are perfect, but they're better than those guys. They're better as Nixon or Mitchell put it, "Yes, we were doing all this stuff to keep McGovern out." Well, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey felt the same way about Nixon. Nixon felt the same way about Agnew, his vice President, or about any of his Democratic opponents.

What that means is, the thought of passing over the button to one of those other guys looks extremely ominous. And to avoid that, almost anything is justified. What would not be

justified to keep the button, that button, from getting into the wrong hands? And usually, anybody else is the wrong hands.

I'll give an example. Nixon showed some sneaking feelings at certain points that John Connelly might actually be even better than he was. Very tough, very smart. He certainly had a lot of admiration for John Connelly, would have been happy to see him succeed him, generally. But it's kind of unusual.

Truman may have felt - but he didn't have a button like that, exactly. Truman at first felt very unequal to the job. Probably imagined there were many other people who could do it better. But that feeling didn't last, I'll bet, more than a year, two years at the most, by which time he understood that that button better stay exactly where it is, in my hands, rather than any of these other guys. And I'm sure that's true in the other countries.

Q: Yeah.

A: I was about to say one more thing about the Mediterranean situation that affected my research at RAND in a very important way. I was a very gung-ho Marine lieutenant. I couldn't have predicted whether I'd be any good, whether I could even do it at all. And it's another story, but I did almost wash out of OC. It was luck. I came with a hair's breadth of washing out of OC. But I got the hang of it in basic school, by the end of OC, actually. And I did very well in basic school.

I was offered a regular commission, one of only 10 people in my class at basic school, which is a nine-month course, who was offered a regular commission. In fact, I was at the head of the list. And I turned out to be a good platoon leader. And I had a company which I loved. That was the most satisfying part of my life, really, those months as a company commander.

Then I lost my company because I was getting out of the Marines. And when I was extended for the Med cruise, for the sixth fleet, I was made an assistant operations officer, a job I didn't particularly like. And in the Mediterranean, at one point, we thought that we were going into Alexandria harbor to take out all the American tourists and officials. I think about 1,500 piled on our ships, sleeping on the decks, and sleeping many to a bunk, and so forth. So we moved everybody around. We got 1,500 people or more on the ship, eventually.

But as we were going in, we didn't know how this was going to develop. And it was clear very quickly that once we were in the harbor of Alexandria, the Egyptian authorities did not want us to leave, because they saw an American flag as protection for the harbor against being bombed by what came to be bombing of the British and French. And when I read, by the way, McNamara's account of being in Shanghai as a sailor, the port of Shanghai, when it was being bombed by the Japanese - but he said, "But it was accident." I think he said that it was the Chinese who actually bombed them by mistake, right?

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, in 1937. It shook me, how many times my life has sort of mirrored that of McNamara. Because in 1956 I was in the harbor of Alexandria, where the British and French were bombing the harbor around us, during daylight, so they weren't firing directly at our ship. But flak from the Egyptian gunners was coming down on our ship, quite a bit of this showering down, bits of metal, and all around the ship. And as a matter of fact, the Egyptians had brand new Russian destroyers, much newer than our ship, brilliantly painted in a light green. Everything was new on them. And they came so close to our ship, to get close to the flag, that you could almost have stepped from one ship to the other - starboard accommodation ladder.

And then when the British and French were coming over, they would be firing. But of course, it was the first time they'd fired in combat. So, there began to be explosions all around our ship. And we thought, wow, we're really getting bombed here. And just as McNamara described, we were all on deck, watching all this, not below ship. And these big geysers were coming up. And the gunnery officer from our ship came up and he said, "They haven't set the fuses for air burst, for proximity fuses. These are Egyptian shells that are coming down and exploding when they hit the water."

Well, in the midst of this, or just before this, the Egyptians had closed the submarine nets at the head of the harbor, so we couldn't get out. Because they wanted us there for what protection we could give. And it looked at one point as though we were going to be interned. We might be interned by the Egyptians. And so my boss, Major See, a friend of mine who had had my company before I had it, said to me, "Well, Lieutenant Ellsberg, we may have to make plans here for being interned by the Egyptians." I said, "Interned? I'm not going to be interned. What are you talking about?" He said, "Well, the Egyptians may decide that they don't want this warship in their harbor, and they may intern us." I said, "This is a reinforced American Marine battalion. The Egyptians can't intern us." And I foresaw a regime change, you know very fast, before that happened.

He said, "Well, that's what they may order. Washington may decide to do that." I said, "They're not going to intern me." And he said, "You too, Lieutenant Ellsberg. If the order is to be interned, you will be interned." And I thought to myself, bullshit. And I looked around the ship for a good boat that I could offload, with maybe one guy to help me, if I could get somebody. I picked out a guy I thought would be a good, the weapons man, actually, a sergeant, a good guy, I thought, to go with me. I didn't want to tell too many people. But we were going to offload this boat. And it had water in it. And I drew my .45. It was all I was allowed to draw on the ship, from the armory. And I started poring over maps,

this time maps of Egypt. We were in Alexandria. And it seemed to me that El Alamein, over to the east, was some kind of a target I could head for along the coast, and so forth.

But my attitude was, as a Marine lieutenant - at the last moment, I thought, I'll take with me any volunteers I can get, but no Egyptians are going to intern this Marine. That's the way I thought. So, it turned out that it didn't work out that way.

Now, the reason I mention that at all is that I got very heavily into the command and control process of nuclear weapons once I was at RAND. That was my specialty. And I started with the thought that one of the things I was looking at was the possibility of unauthorized action with nuclear weapons. And I started from the principle that you didn't have to be crazy, or flip your lid. You didn't have to be, I don't know, incompetent or something, to violate orders about the use of nuclear weapons. I imagined circumstances under which a highly motivated, gung-ho, the equivalent in the Air Force, person might think the time has come for me to go against my orders, and to carry out a mission that I've not been explicitly ordered to carry out, that he might do it for the most dedicated, committed reasons. And I found lots of circumstances in which that could happen.

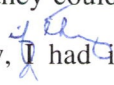
That's sort of a long story. But I was just reading today, for example, that LeMay had taken the precautions of making sure he could circumvent, as head of SAC, the supposed control system, as he put it. In those days, by the way, nuclear weapons were all under civilian authority, in the late 40s. And they had to be turned over to the military, because as LeMay said bitterly, "they didn't trust us with the weapons," and that meant that you had to fly to a storage area, pick up the bombs, bring them back, fly off, and so forth.

He said, "If Washington had been destroyed, if I didn't have" - this is in this little book that Adam showed me this afternoon, by chance. And I recognize this point of view entirely, because he said, "I went to the man in charge of those weapons, I, General LeMay, head of

Strategic Air Command.” And he said, “I found that we didn’t own the weapons, but we guarded the weapons, at this. And a civilian had a key to the storage locker. So I went to that man, and I made him understand that if need be, I would get those weapons, without an order. And he understood that.”

So one of his generals in this conversation said to him - was rather shocked to hear this, apparently, a little bit, in the dialogue that’s going on. He says, “Well, Curt you don’t mean you’d do it without orders.” He said “Well, yes, if I couldn’t get any orders, because Washington was destroyed.” And he said, “Well, but of course, you know, the president has absolute authority to do this.” “Yes, but if there’s no President, I want to be sure we have the weapons.” So he said, “Well, if half the” - The general says, “If half the country was destroyed, I hope you’d wait until we’d been attacked.” He said, “No, no, no, no, no, no. I wouldn’t wait until the country had been attacked, you know, had been destroyed.” And he says, “Well, if half the country had been destroyed, then you might do it.” He says, “No, no. It wouldn’t take half the country.”

So finally LeMay gets rather specific. He said, “I might not.” He said, “I would certainly want to be able to use them if I was out of touch with Washington, or if they were in a crisis,” is what he’s saying. And so he said, “I would certainly go that far, and I’d get them loaded on the planes.” The other general says, “Well, you wouldn’t launch them.” He said, “Well, maybe not if it was just Washington,” especially a Democratic President, you know. But he said, “But it wouldn’t take half the country before I launched them,” is what LeMay said. I just read that this afternoon.

That was exactly what I found at every level of command. Everybody had taken precautions that they could use those weapons if their boss or they themselves felt it was time to go. You know,  had indications. And they were out of communications. At every level, they’d figured out ways of doing this.

And it wasn't, usually, very hard. Let me leap ahead to something. A Congressional committee in 1960 went over to Germany to check on the command control conditions of the weapons to be used in case of European war by our German allies. Now, of course, keeping the weapons out of the hands of the Germans, for their own independent capability, was a major, you know, cornerstone of NATO and of the world's security, basically. The US was there because we controlled the weapons, not the Germans. However, we sold planes to the Germans, ⁸star fighters, and all kinds of things that could carry nuclear weapons. And it wasn't the idea that they would sit by on the ground while our fighters did all the fighting, did all the dropping.

So, nuclear weapons were assigned to their planes, as in the case of the Turkish - the ⁸ICBMs that were in Turkey. We owned the warheads. We owned the bombs. But the bombs were on the planes. And in some cases, where the bombs were in a Quonset hut, or some kind of a storage facility, we owned them. But they were surrounded by German soldiers, guarding them, of course. Okay. But the American lieutenant had a key around his neck. That was US ownership. The Russians, knowing this, as they undoubtedly did know it, could excusably read that as Germans having nuclear weapons, basically. To have them and fly off with them, they would have had to overpower the American lieutenant with a .45 on his hip, and a key around his neck, or threaten him, or maybe they'd have to kill him. But, you know, that was possible.

This was one of the things I discovered in my studies of command and control, an extreme looseness of control everywhere in the world on these matters, with nuclear weapons. And as I say, the LeMay thing that I read was just a repeat of a conversation I had with LeMay the one time I met him. This is, in a way, part of a longer story. Shall I go on with this?

Q: Sure. Tell me about your conversation with LeMay.

A: Yeah. Well, look, what I had discovered, which was true then, and is undoubtedly certainly true today, although I have no immediate, direct knowledge of it, but the situation is the same, and I'm certain the arrangements are the same, as certain as anything is - Can be wrong about anything. I discovered, in studying command and control in the Pacific - I went to every command post in the Pacific. Underground command posts in Tokyo. Used to be the imperial headquarters command post, one of their few subterranean command posts, underground command posts in this country. But I went to all the command posts all over the Pacific, and most of them in this country. As I say, I was coming to be a great specialist in the issue of command and control of nuclear weapons, which in part meant assuring that a go order would go, and be executed, if the President or someone decided that it should.

And on the other hand, I in particular looked at something that other people didn't emphasize that much, how to keep the weapons from going if the President had not - was alive, and had not decided for them to go. Now, there was an intermediate situation there. What if Washington had been hit, and the President wasn't there to decide? What did you do with that? So I got into one of the greatest secrets of our secrecy system, which was, what were the arrangements for delegation of authority for if the President were hit, or what they called devolution of political authority, meaning, where does political authority go when the President and the vice President are destroyed? Who gets to decide, and who practically does decide? So, that was a subject that I was a great specialist in at that point. Well this led - I should go back.

Q: What does it mean to be a great specialist in the devolution of authority?

A: It didn't mean - expert is hardly the word, you know? It's just, like our social studies class in 1944, who had thought about the implications of a nuclear bomb for one week in the ninth grade, that was one week more than anybody else outside the Manhattan Project. So we

were kind of experts on it, relatively speaking. I read once that an expert is someone who's read a book that no one else has read. And in this case, for example, even in the Manhattan Project, it wasn't until the spring of 1945 that the people in Chicago at the Met Lab, who weren't doing the real final work on putting the bomb together, had time to start putting a study group together to think about, what are the political implications of all this? Should we test? What if we test? Might we not test? How will that effect the future of this country? And so there was the Frank Committee, under a guy named James Frank, a physicist, Nobel Prize, and Leo Szilard, and Eugene Rabinowitz, and several others, for the first time, in early '45, after my class of ninth graders, were really looking at, what should we think about this bomb? Where are we going with it? And that was a very significant period. We might come back to it at some point.

But, so I was a specialist, not - and you could say expert, in this very technical sense. I knew a lot about it. I'd looked at it. I knew the secrets. I'd talked ^{to} the controllers. I'd read the plans. I'd done this and that. Virtually no other civilian that I know of had seen the war plans that I'd seen, but that's another subject. Because of this specialty, which dealt with computers a lot, and communications, in which I wasn't even a layman, to speak of. I was unusually uninformed, to start with, about communications and computers. There were a lot of civilians from IBM and elsewhere who were working on that subject, how to get the word out, how to control the weapons, and so forth. I was looking at some specialized subjects within that, and in particular this very special question, which I sort of invented or came to in particular: How do you prevent unauthorized action? Now, I wasn't the first to think of that, because everywhere there were procedures to prevent that. But the procedures were absurd. They were ludicrous. In effect, some major had been given an afternoon to think about this, and put in a procedure. It was terrible, totally loose. It was no real protection at all. So I'd found every kind of loophole in this thing by looking at it.

Anyway, the other side, though, is, what if the President would want to go. I'm talking about the go code, the execute order, just shorthand, go with our forces. What if the President would have wanted to go if he were alive, but he's been killed, or he has a stroke, as Eisenhower had - had a heart attack, if I recall, during his term. And of course, Reagan later was shot and was in the hospital. What happens, you know, to the authority? So, I became knowledgeable about what - And again, I didn't invent that question. Others had done work on it. And I had access then to the work they'd done, and got more and more involved.

But just to leap up to this LeMay thing, which is almost one of the last things in my command and control career. I'm sorry, I do have to go back to one crucial step. In the Pacific, I was told by a nuclear control officer - in each ship, there was a nuclear control officer. And remember, every ship in the Navy above a tugboat had nuclear weapons aboard. Destroyers, carriers, submarine attackers, which are tiny little ships, they had nuclear depth chargers. Destroyers, nuclear depth chargers. Some cruisers and destroyers, nuclear missiles, to go up against anti-aircraft. And of course, the larger ones had cruise missiles, and the carriers had airplanes loaded with nuclear weapons. Every ship, everywhere, that went everywhere, except the tiniest little ship, had nuclear weapons aboard.

That meant that when they went into a port, their presence would be known to any enemy if they were following it at all, at least pretty soon. That port became a target for any Soviet attack, if there should be a preemptive attack, or a false alarm, a preventive attack. They were making that port into a nuclear target, because it had suddenly become a nuclear base. That was true in particular of Japan, and I say in particular because that was a big place where our ships went for R&R, and for headquarters in some cases. And carriers were there all the time. Cruisers were there all the time.

Now, Japan of course had a security treaty with us, which - and had what they call the three or four no's. I've forgotten exactly what they were, but no production of nuclear weapons, no

possession of nuclear weapons, no basing of nuclear weapons, after Hiroshima, very deeply held. Now, anybody in the Pacific knew that we had many weapons in the harbors of Japanese ports, all the time. Yokohama, Tokyo. Carriers would come in and out. Others would stay there for months, one way or another just as if they had a base. The Japanese never asked us whether they had nuclear weapons aboard. And when the question ever arose, they would say, I want to say truthfully, but we have to understand what that means. They would say, "The United States has assured us that they would not bring nuclear weapons into Japan."

Does that include the territorial waters of Japan? We're not talking 12 miles. We're not talking six miles. Say, 60 yards. Say at the dock. That's not just ^{tidal} ~~title~~ waters. They did have nuclear weapons aboard. Is that in Japan or not? Well, for the purpose of targeting, for the Russians, yes. For the purpose of an accident, a collision, which did happen - A nuclear submarine collides with somebody. These are just nuclear reactors, but they can cause clouds. They could cause a meltdown. Clouds of radioactive dust over the city. Yes, that is possible, at all those times. How about a nuclear weapon going off? Harder to achieve, but not impossible at all. So, shouldn't the Japanese know about this? They didn't want to know about it, the government. They were often asked by their Communist party, by their Socialist party, always in the minority, never in the government. "We have reason to suspect - we've read this story, we've done this and that - that there are ships - there are nuclear weapons on this all the time."

The standard government answer was, "We have not been informed by the United States government that there are nuclear weapons on those ships, and we are sure they would inform us if there were. So we are confident that they do not have nuclear weapons." That implied, by the way, since everyone knew that a carrier normally had nuclear weapons, that the Japanese believed - most of them did come to believe ^{that} ~~that~~ somehow they offloaded them before they went to Japan. Where? Okinawa? Guam? Some ship out beyond sight in the

ocean or something? They didn't think about it very much. So they had those weapons there all the time, and in other ports of the world.

So every ship had a nuclear control officer. That's what I started to say. The nuclear control officer - I think it was on the flagship of the Seventh fleet. We were on this command and control inspection tour for CINCPAC, the Commander in Chief Pacific. He wanted a command and control study, and that's what I was doing. That's how I got into this stuff with a bunch of people from Office of Naval Research, ONR. He told me, "You know, the President has delegated the power to use nuclear weapons to CINCPAC, has delegated the authority to use them if he's out of communications with Washington." And he said, "And CINCPAC has delegated that to us at the Seventh fleet."

And this man had some misgivings about this policy, but since I had all these clearances - I think at this time I only had top secret, actually. But that was enough for this, it seemed like. But he told me that. So I began asking other control officers. And I think I said, "Did the President authorize it to be delegated to seventh fleet?" They had, by the way, in turn delegated it below seventh fleet, to carrier squadrons, below. I said, "The President authorized that?" And the guy said, "I don't know." He said, "I don't know. I do know that Admiral Felt, CINCPAC, is holding a letter from the President that delegates this, and he in turn has given a similar letter to the commander of seventh fleet, that if he's out of communications or under certain other conditions - it doesn't mean he should fire, but he can use his own discretion in a crisis, or if he's under attack, to use his weapons."

Now, remember, in those days - this was now 1959 I was studying this, my first year as a full-time employee at RAND - no weapons had locks on them that could keep them from being fired by that level of authority. The level of authority that controlled the weapon, physically, could fire it. And there was no physical thing to keep - So the only thing that kept them was a series of orders which all did have the character. All the war plans said weapons can be

expended only as authorized by the President of the United States. And that seemed to reflect the Atomic Energy Act, which said only the President has the authority. The President has the authority, is what it said. It didn't say only, to delegate - I'm sorry - to execute the war plans, use nuclear weapons.

If I can leap ahead quite a bit, when I raised this question in Washington, at various times, it led to a study being done by the legislative reference service to a committee in Congress - I think it was foreign affairs - which quoted the AEA, the Atomic Energy Act, says the President is authorized. And it said, "But any Presidential power may be delegated." Hmm. [laughter] That seemed to leave an opening there, which people didn't on the whole realize.

Anyway, I talked to other control officers, and found that everybody was aware, at that level, that their boss had written authorization - this was at the Seventh fleet level, now - written authorization to use nuclear weapons if they were out of communications. Now, Washington was out of communications with Hawaii, with CINCPAC in Hawaii, part of every day on the average for an hour, two hours, three hours, for atmospheric disturbances. CINCPAC was out of communication with Seventh fleet in what was called WESTPAC, I think in the Japanese waters and elsewhere, part of every day. So this was meant to assure, then, that if war took place and hit the higher levels of command, the nuclear weapons would not be inoperative, would not be paralyzed, where they could be destroyed on the ground or captured, whatever. It allowed for this possibility though. You couldn't have a retaliatory force in those days unless you had some degree of delegation like that.

A problem in my mind was, did the President realize how much this had been imitated at lower levels of command? I couldn't find any indication that the President knew that. It's one thing to give it to a four-star admiral, another thing to go way down the chain of command. So I got very interested in the question, how many fingers are on these buttons?

It wasn't just one. It wasn't just 10. Was it 100 or 1,000, or more? So I began investigating that a lot, from RAND.

Well, I'll leap across some things and come up to LeMay. A high level group under Kennedy was put under General Partridge, Earl Partridge, who had been head of NORAD, the North American defense command. He's retired now. And he had this study group of very high-level people, mostly generals and admirals, and a couple civilians like me, on the question of devolution of Presidential authority. How can you assure that there will be an authorized go under all circumstances? So, earlier in the year - Actually, I guess we were the ones. I'd done this also under the task force put under Gates the year before, under Eisenhower. I was also on that task force.

And on that task force for the same issue, just before Eisenhower left office - we did it over Christmas vacation, I remember, Christmas holiday - we had arrived at a elaborate system of command posts that were inter-netted, interlocked, one or two on command ships in the Atlantic and in the Pacific and so forth, with all the communications facilities on them, planes - underground command posts. It was basically three elements to this. Underground command posts, one at ~~Fort~~ Mount Weather near Washington, and another one. There were two in the vicinity of Washington. The AJCC, Alternate Joint Command something. AJCC. Alternate Joint Command center, obviously. So way down, buried in rock, so forth. Pretty likely to survive a near miss from a nuclear weapon, maybe even a direct hit.

The ship was moving around, so that was unless it was under constant surveillance, a little more likely to survive. And then you had at Offut Air Force base and a couple of other places a command ~~ship~~ ^{plane}, ready to take off at all times, and then in crises, the idea would be, it was in the air at all times, so you had four of these things or so relieving each other. They would be in the air at all times, with a brigadier general on that plane with communications,

able to send word to the ~~h~~minutemen and other missiles, and to the SAC crews on the various bases to execute their war plan.

Any of these places could do that. So the idea was to have redundant command posts with landlines as far as you could on land, and off to Offut, with airborne communications. Satellites were coming in at that point and the ship. So, it was very boring duty. In fact, Major See ended up on one of those ships, my old commander. He didn't thank me for it later, when I told him that I'd helped devise that system. Incredibly boring duty, just sailing around on this ship all the time, you know, waiting for a Russian attack which didn't take place. And then I think it was a little less boring for the people in the planes, but they'd go up for 12 hours at a time, and they'd fly around. And the people underground, and then in the command center.

So we had this inter-netted system that supposedly would survive, then, if Washington was hit, if Washington and Offut was hit, if various bases, various command posts were hit. There would remain some authority. Question was, how did you try to arrange for some central figure, some authority of some sort, to be in a position to give that order? Complicated question, which is being revised every year. It's being worked on every year – this year, by George Bush, you can be 100% sure. In fact, I've talked about it, command post exercises, how this happens. There's even an underground command post under the White House, although the chance that that would survive is quite negligible.

So, I had meanwhile not been able to pin down this question of delegation, in the following sense. In January, or perhaps very early February of the Kennedy administration, I had told this and a lot of other things to my boss, Harry Rowen. He wasn't a boss. I was a consultant - to Harry Rowen in the international security affairs in the Pentagon, where I eventually ended up three years later, and to his boss, Paul Nitze, who was assistant secretary of defense, a job that he'd held much, much earlier in the Eisenhower administration. They sent me over.

They arranged a meeting with McGeorge Bundy, the President's national security assistant. And I went over and gave him a briefing, which covered a number of things, all worth talking about. I'll talk about them later. But including this question of delegation. I said, "It is understood throughout the Pacific that this delegation exists, but I don't know about it in Washington. I haven't been able to track it down in the Joint Chiefs."

McGeorge Bundy did not know of it. He'd been in office now, in the White House, for perhaps two or three weeks. And he didn't know about it. And he then announced at the staff meeting the next day that they would have a working group of one, or a task force of one or something. Daniel Ellsberg ~~would be~~ would represent the White House and the Defense Department. I was a consultant from RAND, now, 30 years old, it so happens - to find out, to investigate the command and control system, but specifically this question of delegation.

So, I was now authorized sort of to go anywhere, see anything, on this particular mission. So I went to the White House command post. In fact, I went, I think on this occasion, to a command post at Camp David. And I talked to the President's naval aide, who was supposedly in charge - who was in charge of the so-called football, the briefcase that contains all the authorization code for going. He was a naval aide, Tazewell Shepherd, a navy captain.

Q: So, there was a football in 1961.

A: Yeah, right. They call it the football. It's a briefcase, with codes in it for authenticating - whoops. Getting mysterious here. Okay. The great football.

?

Q: When did the football come into existence?

A: Oh, well, I'm sure they had it under Eisenhower. It didn't start with Kennedy. So presumably Eisenhower. It still goes on, you know. I'll leap ahead here on one point. When the President is inaugurated in the Capitol, in Washington, there is a dramatic moment of all times, often captured on film, when the man near the outgoing President of the United States who has the briefcase with him, always meant to be within yards of the President, wherever he goes - how they handle it for some informal occasions I'm not sure, but in theory, he's supposed to be with the President at all times. He's carrying that. His job is to give it to the President in case - It has in it, by the way, nowadays - I think the briefcase has a radio phone in it, where he has communication. And if he gets the word, "Bring the President into this picture," he gives it.

There's this dramatic point that's often been commented on, that at the moment the incoming President takes the oath, the man with the football shifts his gaze from the old President to the new President. And that's often described, that moment where the authority has descended, see. The force is now with the new man, and he goes with him. His old boss is gone now. He goes off to a helicopter and flies away, after a lunch or something. And now this mantle, this, you know, scepter has been passed.

The meaning of that, of course, is to tell the American public, to remind them of the awful power of this man that descends on him. So we have to hope that he's up to it. We have to hope he grows into office, and mysteriously becomes able to, you know, deal with this responsibly, and that only he can do that. And this is simply a charade. Those codes are all over the place. Does that mean that only the President - if that - if the guy was vaporized, if a bomb fell on both of them, the force is paralyzed? No. It doesn't. It just doesn't. Those codes mean that the President can, in principal, send the force off if he's in a bad mood, wakes up at the middle of the night from a nightmare or something, or whenever. But it doesn't mean he's the only one who can do that.

So, the other question was, well - I was saying, how many, after all, can do it? And if I could pin that - Oh, I didn't finish the story. Shepherd said, "No, I know of no such delegation." I said, "Well, would you know?" "I'm the President's naval aide, you know. I'd have to know that." And you know, he had the job a little before. Well, okay. So, I went off to various other underground command posts, would be the logical places to know. I mean, they're the ones who have to send this stuff off. No one had heard of it. They didn't. They said they didn't know of any such authorization. So I came back and reported to ^{Carl} Carlo ^{Kayson} Kazen, who was an old professor of mine that I'd known at Harvard, now the deputy. He was on leave from Harvard. He was the deputy to McGeorge Bundy, who had been Dean of the Harvard faculty. He was the Deputy Assistant for National Security, and he had come in, in the course of my doing this study, after I got the job.

And I said, "All right, here's where I am. I've been to seven or eight places." I said, "I can't find any evidence that that delegation exists. Either these guys are lying to me, which is always possible, but with the authority I had under this case, it didn't seem plausible somehow. Why bother to send me out if they're expecting people to lie to me? But they don't seem to know about it. But on the other hand, everybody in the Pacific, I can tell you - I mean, in the nuclear circles - does believe this." So, I said, "That doesn't end the story here. If they believe it, it's as if it existed. They're going to act on it."

"So you've got a situation here where you've got to decide one way or the other. If you don't want that delegation to be going all the way down, then you've got to send out an order that says, 'There is no delegation below a certain level.' You may want to delegate to the theater and specific specified commanders." Specified command was mainly SAC. It was a one service command. The others were called unified commanders. They had several services under them.

I said, "You can say that if you want to delegate it to the unified commanders, four-star people, you may have to do that. But you should then take specific measures that they do not delegate it lower if you don't want it delegated lower." And I said, "That's true if it doesn't exist. If it does exist, despite all I've been told, you have to decide whether to revoke it or not. You know, the same thing goes through." So that's where I was. As far as I could tell, the letters did not exist, although they were believed to exist in the Pacific.

Q: How many people do you think actually had authority at that time, in some form or another?

A: Should I jump ahead?

Q: Yeah.

A: What I came to learn was that almost all of the unified and the specified commander in SAC had that authority. I don't know how many of them had delegated it. But what I've learned about the Pacific was certainly true, and it was clearly also to some extent true in Europe, CINCEUR. There had been delegation below the CINC, the Commander in Chief theater operation. So, right there, you've got nine or 10 people before the delegation. But when you put that down, you've got you know, tens more possibly hundreds more. And the question was, as I said, everybody in the command process knew about this, and took it as a legitimization of their own taking matters into their own hands. So, I'll go ahead to one illustration of that in a moment.

But let me just say, on LeMay I had told Kazen this whole story, and we had the opportunity on the Partridge group - No, actually, that was in the spring. Yeah, I see I have to correct the timing here a little bit. Well, in fact, I'd better tell you one story that I found in the course of doing all this. I wanted to see how low that delegation had gone. So I picked out on a map

the furthest north base in the Pacific. It was a little air base called Kunsan up above Osan in Korea. And it was minutes flying time from North Korea, and a few more minutes, less than an hour, much less than an hour to Russia, the Vladivostok area in northern Russia.

So, I got orders to go to Kunsan. I knew it had nuclear weapons there. So I flew into Seoul, and then I took a later plane to Osan, as I recall, which was the sort of general command post, and then a little plane to Kunsan.

And I picked it out because it looked remote. So I come down in what looked like a little frontier town, like a little Western town, dusty, red hills, mountains, and a few Quonset huts, and 12 F-100s on the strip, on alert much of the time, each with a - see if I can remember the name of this. I think it was a Mark 28 weapon slung under them, which was a 1.1 megaton bomb, about the size of a torpedo. And that means 1.1 million tons of TNT equivalent, 1.1 million tons. The Hiroshima bomb had been 13,000 tons, so if you think of that as 11 KT, 11 kilotons, this was 1,000 times more in one bomb. It was 1,000 Hiroshima bombs under one of these ^{planes} bombs. He had 12 of them.

Now, one million tons is half of the tonnage of World War II, which was two million tons. I just read today, by the way, for the first time, in this book about LeMay, there were some new figures that were larger than I'd ever seen for World War III. They seemed to add up to 3.2 million tons. It surprised me. I'd never seen figures that large. But I've been using the figure two million tons for a long time, half a million in the Pacific, a million and a half in Europe.

So, each of those planes had half of World War II in them. Twelve of them had six World War IIs, under this command of this major on the landing strip. So, he greeted me at the landing strip. We went in, had some coffee, and so on. I drank coffee in those days. And he had my orders, and so forth. So I began asking him questions.

And after a while, I think one of the questions was if planes took off here for, let's say, an alert, if you were ordered to launch on alert, but not to go to target how long would it take for those planes to be in radar range - I think that was the queue - of North Korea, or out of line of sight range of your radio? He said, "Well, that's a pretty restricted question. I'm not sure I am authorized to give you the answer to that." I said, "Oh, you're authorized, all right. Look at my orders." And he said, "No." I asked a couple of questions like that, rather technical questions. And he said, "I can't tell you that." I said, "Well, let's settle this one. Let's go to the radio here, and get in touch with Tokyo, where my orders had been issued."

So, we went over. But he was out of communications with Tokyo as happened every day. Also part of every day with Osan, the next higher level of command, in between Tokyo. So we waited for a while. I read a magazine or something. About an hour later, the communications went through. And he gets the word back, you can tell this guy anything. He says, "All right, what was your question again?" So I asked him the question, and he didn't know the answer that - He didn't know, [laughter] which I took as honest. He understood. He was now answering my questions in general. But this one that had stuck him up for a minute, that he wasn't authorized to tell, he didn't know. But he could estimate, you know. It was a few minutes. It wasn't very long.

Now, then I asked him, "Have you ever taken off" - let's see. I said, "What would you do now if you got a message from Osan or from Tokyo that it was an alert." He said, "Well, you know what I'm supposed to do, right?" No, I'm sorry, I said, "What if you were out of communications, and you had reason to believe that there was a war on? You're out of communications, but it was a crisis, and you thought you might imminently be under attack? What would you do?" Now, he said, "You know what my orders are, right?" And I said, "Yeah, I do, but you tell me."

I had learned already that he was not authorized to take the planes off in alert, as SAC planes were authorized to do without an explicit order. If he didn't have an explicit order, he could not taxi them or take them off with those bombs aboard. And the reason was that the Mark 28 was not meant to be carried under-slung, externally. It was not what they call three point safe, which meant that if you dropped it, it might go off. And so it was supposed to be inside the plane, but these were outside the plane, so they were more dangerous. And this was also true, actually, on Okinawa. I knew this was for all F-100s, saw the same thing in Okinawa.

Q: Wait a second. If you dropped it, it might go off?

A: It might go off. Might go off. The three point safe meant this. The implosion device in the plutonium bomb, a Nagasaki type bomb, which is the trigger, the percussion cap, for every hydrogen weapon - The Nagasaki bomb has a series of explosive charges around it, shaped charges that focus their explosive energy on the core of plutonium. When they all go off simultaneously, it compresses the plutonium, it increases the density, and it becomes more than critical mass. So you have a sphere of this kind. When the forces go off, it squeezes together. It becomes more than critical mass, and it explodes. That was the 20,000 ton bomb that killed about 58,000 people in Nagasaki. That's the trigger for a hydrogen bomb.

Every hydrogen bomb of which we now have at this moment, more than 10,000, still, less than we used to - and the Russians have well more than 10,000 - has a Nagasaki bomb for its trigger inside it. So, what you see when you look at a picture of Nagasaki or Hiroshima, but say Nagasaki, is what happens to the center of a city when you drop on it the percussion cap for a modern weapon, for an H-bomb. So this man then had 12 Nagasaki bombs encased in hydrogen bombs under his airplanes, his F-100s, which as I recall were single pilot planes, by the way, each one of them. So each one of those pilots would have under him, half a World War II.

Q: Why -

A: And this is under this major.

Q: Why would the human race want to do this, exactly?

A: Well, wait. You've asked the right question. That's why I'm giving all this detail. How can it be that humans got into this situation? I'll tell you one other thing that leads up to this. In Okinawa, where they had all kinds of planes, they sometimes had B-52s, or B-58s or whatever, but they also had a lot of F-100s. And strictly speaking, you didn't need any F-100s in a thermonuclear war. You had B-52s. You had B-58s. You had B-47s, strategic bombers. These F-100s were not under Strategic Air Command control. They were not part of SAC's war plan. They didn't even count it in.

When they came to figuring how many bombs it would take a Strategic Air Command to destroy a city or a missile base or something, they paid no attention to the fact that PACAF, the Pacific Air Command, from planes on ground or on carriers, would also be hitting those targets. They didn't even add them into the plan. That's petty stuff, you know, petty shit. And they didn't want to coordinate with it. They didn't coordinate their plans at this time at all, in '59. Later they did.

So, why were these planes with nuclear weapons at all? Well, does PACAF want to sit by while SAC fights the war? No. Do they want to go in for budget, where they only fight little bitty wars, and have no contribution to blowing up the world? No. So all the F-100s had to have nuclear weapons too.

Q: Competitiveness?

A: Budget. That is the war. That's what the game is. The big fight in the 50s especially, and to some extent every since, is fighting for the share of the budget, and the size of the budget. And the Air Force got what it wanted, sole authority for nuclear war, which Eisenhower was depending on for deterrence, because dollar for dollar, and bang for bang, and bang for a buck, nuclear war was cheaper. He was very concerned about inflation, about budget deficits. And the way to prepare to fight war, the cheapest way, with the Russians, was a thermonuclear war. So the question was, who got to fight a thermonuclear war? If it was only the Air Force

—

Q: Nuclear war is cost effective?

A: Well, deterring it – the more you had. You hoped you never had to fight it, but the other theory was – the word in the Air Force was, “What about the smaller wars that you do have to fight?” And the answer there was, - let's see. How did they call this? The dog that can take care of the cat can take care of the kittens. That was the line. The dog that can take care of the cat can take care of the kittens. In other words, if you can fight the big war with superior strength, by the same weapons, you can fight the little wars easier.

So the idea was, our plans were entirely based on first use of nuclear weapons under Eisenhower. There was very little preparation for non-nuclear war. Now, a non-nuclear war that was against other than the Soviets would be one-sided in those days. Just the two of us had the nuclear weapons. So if we fought them with nuclear weapons, we wouldn't get any back unless we were fighting an ally of the Soviets. But the Soviets wouldn't come to their defense with nuclear weapons if they knew that would be suicide.

If we had enough weapons that under any circumstances we could destroy the Soviet Union first or second, then the Soviets would not defend their allies with nuclear weapons, and we

could threaten to or actually carry out destroying those little countries - North Vietnam, North Korea, wherever - with our nuclear weapons. Problem's taken care of.

So, what we have to have is superiority of nuclear weapons. But let me try to pin down this particular story on Kunsan a little bit more. I'll come back to the budget implications in a minute, which still apply, and to every other country. Now that Russia's budget has gone to hell, and their military budget is now a tiny fraction of what it used to be, they have turned to Eisenhower's new look, bigger bang for the buck. It's where I came in in 1953, '54, when I was in the Marines. Primary reliance on nuclear weapons by the Russians. In this world, in this world we're living in, they went to that for exactly the same reason as Eisenhower 50 years ago. It's, looks cheaper. And the same is true for India, Pakistan, or any other country. If the nuclear weapons can be used at all, legitimately or practically, they're cheaper.

So, come back to my major, though, if I may. I'm sorry that I keep digressing. I did want to come in with Okinawa. In Okinawa, then, the F-100s are on alert, not all of them, but some are on alert, strip alert. But Okinawa is a place where people had their families, and you could get around. It was a big island. And they didn't want to be stuck in that little Quonset hut all the time, waiting for the alert. They had a training exercise every day, and their program was to have the pilots in the planes with their engines running, revved up, in 10 minutes from the alarm going on. And they had it arranged so the pilots didn't have to be in the Quonset huts at the end of the strip to do that. They could be at the PX, or the BOQ, the Bachelor Officers Quarters, or something, or even home, if it was close enough.

Each pilot, each crew on alert, had a jeep with him wherever he was. So they said to the guy in charge of our research group for ONR, they said, "Look, we do it at random here. You can pick the time when we run the alert." So, we got briefed, and we did this, and we did that. And finally the head of our group, whose name I forget at the moment, said, "Okay, let's do it now." Said, "Okay. Press it." We pressed the klaxon in, I think. He pressed the klaxon.

“Woop, woop, woop.” You can hear the klaxons reverberating all over, as far as you could hear from the field. And instantly, jeeps begin coming, converging on this field. And they’re coming from all over. Some people were in the Quonset hut. They come there and within minutes those guys are in the plane. The Mark 28s are under-slung beneath them. The engines are running. Ten minutes. Ten fucking minutes, you know, incredible. There they were.

They could not, however, taxi, and the reason that I learned for that, which I applied to Kunsan, was that if you taxied, one might blow up. And if it was an early one, it blows the whole squadron up.

Q: It’s that problem. If you drop them, they might go off.

A: Might go off. I started to mention all these shape charges, and I got on a different subject. The shape charges are individual, but they’re wired to fire simultaneously. They’re special. That’s a very tricky electrical problem, and it takes some special equipment which is very suspicious if somebody orders it, [laughter] some country. It’s the kind of thing Valerie Plame was sort of looking for, to fire all these things simultaneously. The three point safety, or one point safety, means: one point safe means that if one of those charges around the thing goes off, it will not go off. That’s not too safe because if two went off, it might go off. With three point safe, means that it can be carried under-slung because it takes three - three or more. It might be more, may be more than three, four, to go off simultaneously, to cause a partial explosion.

With only three or one or five, you probably wouldn’t get the full power of the blast, but you would get some blast, a small one, maybe 1,000 tons, 3,000 tons, instead of a million tons. You might get a Nagasaki blast, but not a full blast. So, actually, if you got a Nagasaki blast, you’d get a full blast. It would be enough for the hydrogen fuel. But for a smaller blast, you

might be only - literally only 1,000 tons, or 150 tons, or something like that. Still wipe out the squadron. So, they couldn't taxi because there was too much danger that one would blow up.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I'd already learned the question to ask on that one. Supposing nine of the 10 planes, have left and then they see a fireball on the base, an alert. Now, here is the kind of thing I'd been studying for the last year and a half at this point, going back from my Marine experience. All the forces, both in the alert, in the Pacific and in SAC had what was called positive control. In fact, I think RAND took credit for having some role before I came there in encouraging this positive control idea. And the idea was, you can launch in two ways. You can launch immediately with a goal, go to target. Or, you can launch to get planes in the air, where they'll be less vulnerable to attack. But they are not to go unless they get another explicit order to go to target. If not, what do they do? They go up, and they loiter - actually, there's another name for it - rendezvous somewhere. I think they did call it loitering. Should be a law against loitering with nuclear weapons, right?

But they would go in this circle, for a certain specified point. And if they did not get a positive order to go to target, they would return to their target. It was called positive control. So that meant you could, to some degree safely, get the planes off the ground without fearing - before you were sure that it was a war. It was a warning. It was an alert. It was a crisis. You could get them up there without supposedly taking the risk that you have to commit them to targets, so you can do it sooner. You don't have to wait for more definitive evidence, which might be too late: the mushroom cloud.

Supposing, though, the two things that struck me: these particular planes, unlike SAC, were not used to exercising to the point of taking off. They didn't even taxi with those things on.

Supposing there was a bigger alert than usual. I mean, a real false alarm, or a real alarm. They're ordered to take off. That would never have happened before. They're now in a situation, let's say in a crisis that may have been going on for weeks, like the Taiwan Straits crisis in '58 and '54, or the Berlin crisis, or something like that. In the midst of the crisis, a serious alert takes them off. At this point, they already know, now, we've gone further. This is more serious than ever before, if it's already a crisis. We're almost surely at war. We're about to get an alert. I mean, an execute order. Okay? That's their set. We're back to your, believing is seeing, or believing is hearing aspect.

Supposing then they're out of communications. Easy to happen. What do they do? This was the question I was trying to investigate in the Pacific, at that point. So, now we come back to Kunsan. I asked the major the standard question I'd been asking everyone. I said, "What if" – he was not supposed to take off. So I said, "What if, now, you believe you're about to be under attack for some reason? What would you do?"

And he said, "Well, you know what the orders are." This is the point where I said, "Yeah, you tell me." He said, "Well, I would take them off." He said, "I'm the commander of this base, and one of the basic rules of war, principles of war, is that you protect your troops. And I am the commander of these troops. If I thought they were about to be under attack, I would send them up, and get them out of the way," which - as far as I was aware, and he told me - was against his orders. And he gave me the reason.

So I said, "Okay. Where is their rendezvous point, their loiter point?" An, I think there was another name for it, but I forgot. It was so-and-so, very clear, very near North Korea, actually, perhaps just outside radar range, I think. I said, "Okay. What would happen, do you think, if they don't get an order to go ahead?" He said, "Oh, they'd come back, most of them, I think." The ^{old} guy had the wrong order there. He said - I'm trying to imitate him - "They'd come back, I think, most of them." And I was "think," you know, to myself –

“think!” You think they’d come back! This screaming inside my head. He said, “Most of them.” He went on. ^{Of course} “If one of them goes on, they might as well all go. You know, the war is started.”

So I said, “Let’s take another example here. Supposing they’ve taken off on your order, and there’s an explosion on your base. There’s an explosion on the base,” which, by the way, would have an effect on high frequency communications, cut off. It would have a blackout effect. So it would keep them from high frequency communications to any other headquarters, down to line of sight. It’s an explosion. Of course, I forget whether I postulated to him or not that it was an accident. You know, it could have been a plane. One plane hits another, and they go up. It could be a high explosive. The high explosive charges were quite likely to explode, causing a big explosion. But they would probably not cause a nuclear explosion, but they might.

I said, “There’s a nuclear explosion on the base. What would they do then?” He said, “Well, it would depend where it was.” He said, “If it was Okinawa, where there” - this is the distinction he made. It wasn’t totally logical to me. He said, “If it was Okinawa, where their families were, I think they wouldn’t come back, if they didn’t get a positive order to go ahead. They’d go to another field.” But the distinction he seemed to be making in his head was, if it was just the major they’d lost, you know, back at the base, they would go on to target.

Q: We have to stop for a second.

END OF TAPE 4

Q: No, wait - I didn’t quite finish the delegation story, if I could.

A: Please.

Q: It was about in April of 1961 that I reported the case and I'd gone as far as I could with the study, report to McGeorge Bundy. As far as I could tell there was no delegation from the President, from President Eisenhower. About two months later, it was after Vienna, the Vienna meeting, which was in June, meeting between Kennedy and Khrushchev, I was in Kazen's office again, in the Executive Office Building next to the White House. And he remarked, "We found the folder." He put it, "We found the notebook," or "the folder." I said, "What notebook?" He said, "The one that has the delegation letters in it." "Really?"

And he pointed over to his table, next to the window, and he sort of flipped it. And I didn't have a chance, and I didn't insist on such matters, to be able to read it. But I could see there were letters inside. It was a loose-leaf notebook. He said, "The delegations that Eisenhower wrote to the different commanders authorizing them to use nuclear weapons." And I said, "Under what conditions?"

He said, "Well, there were a couple. If he was out of communications, each of these was then on his own judgment, to use nuclear weapons if he felt appropriate. Or, if the President was incapacitated, as Eisenhower had been." In other words, the Vice President, if he's alive, assumes authority, then as President, or Acting President, or Commander in Chief. Although there's a problem, you know, at what point does he decide the President is incapacitated. But say he was totally incapacitated, as Nixon had in mind, for me in 1972, or as Eisenhower had been with his stroke. The Vice President, in theory, takes over. But, who knows how many minutes or hours are involved in that. And moreover, the Vice President may or may not have any background or qualifications under those circumstances, for some period, at least. The CINCS, the Commanders in Chief in different theaters, and SAC, CINCSAC, Commander

in Chief, Strategic Air Command at Offut in Omaha would be on their own, essentially, for a period. And had authority.

Now, I should also mention that when I was in the Pacific in '59, that was just not long after the Taiwan Straits crisis of - I get these years confused a little, but I think it was '58, just a year before. And that had actually been very close to being a nuclear crisis. Very close. That's another story. But that was just a year before I was there. And the people I was talking to had been through that crisis. And on Taiwan, for example, that was one of the places where it was clear to me that they felt that they had delegation to use it. There was a crisis. They were out of communications very often, and they could have used that delegation.

The issue now here, always was with me, not whether the delegation existed so much or not, but did the President know that this system was being replicated at each lower level to delegation. Kazen didn't know. So I said, "Okay, where did this come up?" He said, "Well, I wasn't satisfied with your findings." He said, "It left me uneasy, and I kept probing. And we came up with this notebook."

This was now June. Almost six months into Kennedy's first term. So, for some five months the President and McGeorge Bundy, the President's Assistant for National Security, did not have clear evidence that this delegation existed, and was being regarded by his own commanders as in effect. So I had been warning all this time that the key issue was to formally change this system, so that at least it didn't get delegated down to the major in Kunsan. That was the image in my mind.

Something I was very focused on for '61 and '62 was to aid the process, which was getting started, of getting locks on nuclear weapons, so that the operating command level, which might be a sergeant or a major somewhere in the European or Pacific Theater, could not

operate it by themselves. This came to be known as Permissive Action Links, PALs, when they came into existence. And this was a major focus of everything I was trying to do. To assure that at least it had to be a high level of authority, if not the President, and preferably a civilian, if you could somehow bring that about, who would make the decision on whether to go or not. But the lower levels could not, physically, do it.

And the essence of that had been described to me at Rand as early as '59, by an engineer named Jack Carne, who pointed out that the basic idea was a combination lock. You had the lock on the weapon in some sense, so it couldn't be fired without that lock being opened. It could be incorporated in the weapon or it could be an actual combination lock. And the authentication, the execute order, would be in the form of the combination to the lock. You couldn't fire the weapon unless you had the combination. And the combination would not be down at that lowest level.

Simple idea that could get more and more sophisticated, depending on how you did it. And I wanted to get those locks on various weapons. But, at this coming out of the Partridge Committee - I'm sorry, I didn't finish the story with Kazen.

So, however, the loose link in this system was these delegations at the higher level, because even if they could be justified, they had this inherent danger with them, that a commander, like Harry Felt in the Pacific, would say, "Well, if it works for the President to delegate to me because he might be out of communication or he might be dead, the same responsibility works with me in 7th Fleet, or Pacific Air Force. I might be out. And what's good for me should be good for my commander."

Very hard to get away from that idea. But you could try. So I said to Kazen, "What has Kennedy done with the letters?" He said, "Nothing. He's let them stand." So I said, "Really? Why did he do that?" And he said, "This is not the time for Lieutenant

Kennedy,” - he was a Lieutenant and a PT boat commander in the Pacific, equivalent to a Marine captain - “This is not the time for Lieutenant Kennedy to overrule the decision of the great commander, Eisenhower.”

When he said by “not the time,” he meant, quite specifically, June of 1961 was not the time, after the April-May debacle of the Bay of Pigs, and the Vienna Conference, which was widely seen on our side, and apparently rightly so, as having been something of a political debacle, where Kennedy had seemed weak to Khrushchev.

I just had it confirmed to me by William Taubman last week, who’s just wrote a book on Khrushchev, that that impression was not wrong, that Khrushchev had seen Kennedy as weak and immature and shallow at Vienna. But the public didn’t know that, on the whole. The public did know about the Bay of Pigs.

One result of the Bay of Pigs debacle, for which Kennedy responsibility, was to name Curtis LeMay as Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Curtis LeMay was perceived throughout the world as a tough, macho, brutal, efficient commander, whose toughness was a guarantee that our deterrent was safe, even with a weak, inexperienced President at the helm.

And there was clearly a price, somewhat of a danger, of making Curtis LeMay Chief of Staff of the Air Force. It was not automatic. He was at that time, actually - check something here.

Well, anyway, it wasn’t regarded in the Air Force as automatic that he would get that slot, despite his seniority and great record as Commander of SAC. But he did make him that. LeMay is the one person I really have heard of at a high level, at a four-star level, who consistently and very explicitly believed in preventive war. There wasn’t a whole crew of admirals and generals who wanted to go to war with Russia.

LeMay was pretty open about it. And there were a few others you could point to. General Anderson of the Air Force College. A few others. But generally that was not a prevailing notion. But LeMay did believe that, and made it obvious on many occasions. So he was kind of a dangerous man to have in charge of the Air Force. But it's what Kennedy needed for political protection, political coloration at that point. So he took that risk, basically, for it.

Well, later in the year - oh, he wasn't going to overrule the Commander in Chief. He didn't sign new letters with his own authority. He didn't tighten up the system at that point, to make it, you know, under better control. Because that would have made him responsible for that delegation. He left it ambiguous, essentially. Were they delegated? Or were they not delegated? Did that authority under Eisenhower, signed with Eisenhower's name, still apply or not? In effect, he let them believe that it did.

But if somebody made an issue of it in Congress or somewhere else, or somebody abused that authority - hopefully not starting World War III, but in some other way - Kennedy could say, "Oh, I didn't have anything to do with that. That wasn't mine. I didn't know these letters existed." In fact, I suspect that's why he named me as a consultant to investigate this - why McGeorge Bundy did. Straightforward for him simply to ask, CINCSAC, and, you know - "Do you think you have delegation?"

But I think, he in his office wanted to discover what the situation was, which they did with Kazen, and then decide what they wanted to do with it. Because if he'd asked directly, he would have made them aware that he knew what the situation was and would either have to reverse it, which he didn't want to do, or ratify it, which would make it his delegation. So he just left it a little vague. And certainly the commanders did think they had the authority, from then on. And no steps were taken to keep them from putting it down lower, either.

Q: When was that changed?

A: I was told much later. I got Sy Hersh, my friend, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, who had first got his Pulitzer Prize for his reporting of the My Lai massacre, later for CIA wrongdoing, criminal behavior. I got him interested in the subject, and he came across, he said, a major who - this was much later, I think under Carter. And he came across a major, and he told this story to him, and the major said, "Oh, that's absolutely right." Up to '64 - I was reporting it in '61 - he said McNamara changed it in '64. There was a big fight. And he modified the rules. Big secret fight. But he did not eliminate the problem. He just modified the conditions under which the delegation occurred. There was still a delegation.

Then, Nixon changed it in '69. Again, not removing the delegation, but putting his own stamp on it. And he said, I think he actually said that Ford, in his one year in, something happened. So this guy said, under each President there was some modification, and he said that was also true under Carter. I won't go through the whole story with Sy, but he began to pursue this, and he began to get increasingly excited. He was determined to find out what the current situation was. And he called me up and he said, "I've got an assistant secretary who's now going to show me documents. He's going to show me documents." He said, "Dan, this is a bigger story than the CIA story, for which he had gotten, I believe he got a Pulitzer Prize for. He said, "This is bigger than CIA. Don't talk to anybody else. Leave this with me. I'm handling this." I said, "Sure, of course, no problem."

Almost every day for about a week he was calling me, more and more excited. He found somebody else, he was going to get all this stuff. And the major now is going to show him documents, too, as well as the assistant secretary. Then, it dries up.

He calls back and he says, he said, he went to his major, who said, "Sy, the heat is on. Somebody has told them that you're looking into this, and it's come down to me under the tightest orders that I can't talk to you any more about this. And meanwhile, about the same

period, he had a date for lunch with the Assistant Secretary to discuss this. And the Secretary said, "Documents? No, I've never seen any documents, Sy. You must have misunderstood me." And nothing.

So I said, "Okay, the guy at least confirmed to you," - and these were his words, "Ellsberg is exactly right through '64, till '64." So, there is, by the way, one other side to this that is very important. By the way, I said '64. I think it was '67. Sixty-seven. Actually we now have documents that go to '64, that came out just about two years ago, at last, that confirm everything I was saying. This was after, you know, what? Nearly 40 years. Up to '64.

But he said the change was in '67. That was it. McNamara was still in. So, the major had been telling him, "Sy, I'm telling you this because, although the situation has changed marginally from one President to the next, it still is a serious, frightening problem, and I think you're right to be exposing it. We've got to get it out." That's what he'd been telling him.

So, that all dried up. I said, "Well, Sy, you can go ahead. At least he's confirmed to you what I told you through '67. To '67." He said, "Dan, my position at the *Times* is such, right now, I don't want to do a story that's purely historical. If I can't say what the situation is right now, I don't want to do it now." And I was very disappointed. I'd been inclined to go back to more recently and say, "Look, let's go back to that one, if you have the time. Can you find the major? Can you find the Assistant Secretary?"

But actually we have the documents up to '64, now. But there is one other thing. Rather important aspect to the way this worked out. In '64, the President was running against Goldwater, an active reserve Air Force Major General, who had spent his active duty, two weeks duty, in '64, in the Pentagon. He knew the war plans and so forth.

A major issue of the campaign, in some ways the major issue of the campaign, was not Vietnam; it was delegation of nuclear weapons. Goldwater had not only said - early in the year before he was officially nominated - had said that we should be prepared to consider the use of what he called small, conventional nuclear weapons, by which he meant tactical weapons, short-range weapons, relatively small, meaning that they're only Nagasaki scale, or Hiroshima scale, not H bombs, which are much larger. That those should not only be used in Vietnam, but he said, very strongly, commanders should be given the authority to use them on their own authority. Shouldn't have to go back to the President.

This became, in a way, the major issue of the campaign with Vietnam. These were the two major issues.

Q: And, of course, the issues become intertwined.

A: Well, yeah. Well, they did because he talked about using them in Vietnam. So he looked like a nut. He, in effect, said, I, as President, would use them in Vietnam. And in Vietnam and elsewhere, I would be prepared to delegate their use to a field commander. So on both counts, even the President doing that in Vietnam looked crazy. So the issue became, can we turn over the nuclear button to this nut who's incline to use the nuclear weapons very broadly? What's his stability? Psychoanalysts, without examining, without meeting Goldwater, wrote ads saying we don't regard this man as emotionally stable, and so forth.

But the most effective political commercial, they say, of all time, though it was shown, officially, only once, was a little girl plucking petals off a daisy, saying, "One, two, three." And a voice in the background is saying, "Ten, nine, eight, seven." And then the screen goes blank, and then a nuclear explosion is shown. And the slogan, to some extent, was vote this year as if your life depended on it.

But the entire thrust of the campaign was, then, can you afford to entrust nuclear responsibility to a man who would delegate control of nuclear weapons to military commanders.

Q: But they'd already been delegated that way.

A: You say that, having heard me for the last hour. But the public didn't know that. And so, the first campaign speech of the campaign, as always, was Labor Day weekend, in September, at my hometown of Detroit because unions were important then. I joined the UAW when I was 17. Meant to be a union organizer or economist.

Anyway, he was there in Cadillac Square where the Democrats, in those days, always kicked off their campaign. And Johnson said, "I, as Commander in Chief and President, have exclusive authority to decide whether to go to nuclear war." This is a paraphrase: "I would under no circumstances delegate that authority. Under any circumstances."

And McNamara then gave a speech the next day, as I recall, where his theme was "Small, conventional nuclear weapons? There is no such thing as a conventional nuclear weapon. Senator Goldwater is talking about weapons that average the size of the Hiroshima or Nagasaki weapons." And this was a great thing.

So I went in to Adam Yarmolinsky, who's the Assistant to Sec Def, Secretary of Defense, his outer office. And I said, "Adam, does the President realize that that has already been delegated under Kennedy?" And he said, "Well, is that true under Johnson?" And I said, "Well, I'm not sure. I haven't looked into it." He said, "Well, you better look into that."

Now this was '64. I was about to become Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary, but I had been consulting all year in '64 in the Pentagon. And, actually, my main work was doing

a study of nuclear crises, nuclear crisis, with very high clearance, higher than Top Secret now. This was it. At this point I had several clearances higher than Top Secret. And a little later in the year, when I became Special Assistant, I guess I told you, I got all the clearances that my boss had, which was a dozen higher than Top Clearance.

But, anyway, I had good contacts in the Joint Staff. I think Dave Burchinal, General Burchinal, was the Director of the Joint Staff, at that time, as I recall. And I went down to the Joint Staff, and I asked people who would know. And I came back, and I said, "Adam, Johnson has renewed that delegation. He has delegated it." And Adam said, "Hmm. You know, how about that?"

The campaign was fought largely on this issue, and it was a total hoax, rivaled only by the way, what had caused it to arise, really, was this -

Q: Rivaled by what?

A: Vietnam. The other things Johnson was saying was, "We seek no wider war." He said it in every other speech. Everybody in the Pentagon at my level or somewhat below knew that a wider war was on the way as soon as the election was over. There was a dispute as to how wide it would be, how big. The Joint Chiefs wanted a much bigger war than McNamara or Johnson did, but it was going to be a real war, not of advisers, but it was going to be a war with bombing of North Vietnam and probably with ground troops, of course, as appeared.

So we knew that that campaign slogan was a total lie. Seek a wider war? Well, in some other life he would have preferred not to be a war President, but he was well aware, as George W. Bush is facing right now, in Iraq, either I as President get out of this country, leave it to local people to decide their regime, which may be an unfriendly regime to the United States. I give up the aims for which we sent military men into that country in harm's way. I do nothing to

show any gains for the lives we've lost or taken so far, either I do that, or I go into a much bigger, endless war, a war that my advisers - this is exactly the same in both cases - are advising me cannot be won, in the case of Vietnam - except at a much higher level.

And I suspect that President Bush is being told right now, if I go into that war in Iraq, there is no level at which I can win it. The reality there is like the reality in Vietnam, in Iraq. We can't be driven into the sea by the forces in the country. We can keep a foothold there, even a big foothold, as long as we are willing to kill and be killed. We can even make the country relatively quiet, with perhaps 500,000 to 1,000,000 troops, about the same number as would have been required in Vietnam. And it may be relatively quiet, punctuated by, in this case, suicide bombings at home and in Iraq, but relatively quiet, as long as we keep the 500,000 or 1,000,000 troops there.

By the way, in Iraq I suspect the figures are going far above 500,000 at this point, in order for an effective occupation. And when we leave, the country reverts to Iraqis who, by that time, will not be very friendly to the United States. And we leave a country with the second largest oil reserves, unlike Vietnam. A country that may well organize suicide bombings if they hate us enough, whenever we get out, in the United States. A very bad prospect.

The alternative is not - and here's what the military were telling me is exactly what Johnson was facing in '64 - the alternative, for practical purposes, cannot be to stay where we are with the strategy we have. In spring of 1965, that was with 70,000 troops, going on to 100,000. They said we can't stay there because we'll be losing the countryside. It will be collapsing on us. We can keep our base, but it will be embattled, besieged base, and the countryside will collapse.

In Iraq, they will be saying, with 130,000 troops now, we can't keep there from being many, many more suicide bombings against us, or mortaring, rocket fire, than we've had yet. The

casualties will not be one a day. They will not be one a day. They will be 20 a day. Fifty. A hundred. Five hundred in a week. It'll be a war. Big war. That's what I believe, as of today, President George W. Bush is facing. And that's what we faced in Vietnam.

But this was predicted for him in '64. And when Johnson, "we seek no wider war," he knew he was not getting out. He knew the alternative was a larger war, and what remained to be debated inside. And I knew that and everybody inside knew that. Thousands of people. Thousands and thousands. And, to my knowledge, not one member of Congress knew that. No one in the press. No columnists. No TV. Nobody in the public. Except some radicals who had a pretty good theory as to what was happening, and their theory told them we were not going to let go of Vietnam. But most people, and I was certainly not a radical then, most people didn't see that what I saw, as an insider, as of August 4. So I knew that, "We seek no wider war," was a hoax, and I knew that the statement, "I will never delegate," was a lie. And those were the two issues on which he racked up the largest landslide victory in our nation's history.

Q: Why did he have to lie about this?

A: Well, the public didn't want to hear - He didn't have to lie to win against Goldwater, who was fated to be, by that time, the nominee. He would have won almost whatever he might imaginably have said. He wanted a landslide, because he had won by could be called two accidental occurrences. In the first case, being elected as Vice President on a ticket that won with, I think, less than half of one percent of the vote. May have been more like a tenth of a percent of the vote, which he knew largely had been stolen by votes in Texas and Illinois. They were crooked.

And I hear Henry Cabot Lodge, Nixon's running mate, in '60, said, in my presence, at a meeting of the mission council in 1965, '66. He said, "We won the election in 1960. The

votes were stolen.” He said, “But I don’t blame the Democrats for that. I blame the Republicans. We didn’t have enough poll-watchers. We didn’t control the process.” This was apropos of my boss’s, General Lansdale’s, desire to run a very honest election in Vietnam, that would show that we had an alternative to the Communists’ promises. We could give them elections. We could give them freedom. We could give them democracy, which the Communists would never do.

So he wanted the election of ‘66 for a constituent assembly, what they’re talking about now in Iraq, to be elected. He wanted the election for the constituent assembly, which would write a constitution, to be the most honest election that had ever been run, ever, in Vietnam. Impress people. He was going to exclude Communists and the NLF and anybody who had fought against the French.

Actually, Lansdale would have been happy to have non-Communists who had fought against the French, but our Embassy wasn’t going to do that, nor was the Saigon government. But he would have liked to see anybody but Communists, who had led the fight against the French, be able to run and vote in that election for the constituent assembly.

Q: You need to mention, of course, that Nixon’s running mate, Lodge, had now become Ambassador to South Vietnam.

A: He was now Ambassador for the second time. He had been Ambassador, when he first came in. There was a regime change by assassination of the President and his brother and a number of other members of his family. President Ngo Dinh Diem, within months of Lodge arriving, the first time, he presided over that assassination, with knowledge of it and in on the planning for it. But then he left. He left, actually, I think, to come back and with the consideration of running, possibly running in ‘64. He didn’t run. And then he went back in ‘65. So he was my Ambassador when I was in Vietnam.

And when he said this - and it wasn't good news when I reported it to Lansdale, because it meant he was not in sync. He said, "Honest, honest, all this talk about corruption." He said, "I don't think we should apply higher standards in Vietnam than we apply at home." He said, "We would have won if there had been an honest vote in Chicago and Texas." But you know, I don't blame him for that, and so forth, so he did not aspire to very honest elections.

Q: Why should there be honest elections in South Vietnam if they're not honest here?

A: Right. Why set a higher standard? And, actually, in cables he made it clear that he didn't believe in setting, understandably, as high a standard in Vietnam, because it's a Third World country. They're not ready for democracy. We need to be there - this is Lodge's words - "whether they want us or not." And the problem with democracy was, it was almost sure, if it was real democracy, to bring in people who wanted to negotiate with the NLF, rather than kill them. We couldn't allow that.

So, we wanted a regime in there that would not do that, and it couldn't be a democratic regime because that's what the people wanted. I'll go on with that story for just a second. Nixon came to town, and Nixon had been almost the case officer for the CIA when he was Vice President. So he'd had a lot of dealings with my boss, Ed Lansdale, who had been the CIA operative who brought Diem to power, essentially, or kept him in power in '54, '55, and '56. And Nixon knew Lansdale from that. Now Lansdale was retired and was running this interagency affair, a team, with several CIA people, and with me from the State Department. I switched from Defense to State to be in this. Some people from USIA, the information agency, and from the military and the Joint Chiefs. An interagency group.

So the 12 of us were in Lansdale's villa when Nixon came to call on his old subordinate, whom he respected a lot, Lansdale. So Nixon came in, I think the day he'd arrived. He was

there to see his old running mate, Lodge, from 1960. This is now 1965, I think. And, you know, he'd lost the governorship in '62, in California. He came in looking rather unshaven, with his typical Herblock - you know, five o'clock shadow, and rather jowly and jet-lagged. He proved, though, in the discussion, to be quite sharp and smart. That came through.

But, he stood, and we all shook his hand, and we were in a circle around the room. And he was about to sit down in these colonial rattan chairs that we had, and we were all going to sit down, waiting for him to sit down. And he was standing next to Lansdale, and he said, "Well, Ed, what are you up to?" And Lansdale said, "Well, Mr. Vice President, we're trying to help General Tan make this the most honest election that South Vietnam has ever had." Nixon said, "Honest. Yes, honest. That's what you want. Honest. As long as you win!"

And he went like this. He jammed his elbow into Lansdale's arm and then slapped his knee with the return motion. "As long as you win!" And so we sat there, quietly thinking, "Well, he's not going to be a lot of help in persuading Lodge to get behind this honest election idea." It was a prescient moment, in its way.

Q: Prescient?

A: It was foretaste of Nixon's operations. Or what his priorities were. Where were we? I get going on so many side tracks.

Q: Yeah. I know. Just let me ask you -

A: Oh, wait. I'm sorry. I remember. I know I always do this, but I will finish. Here's the delegation issue and Vietnam. Oh, I guess I did finish that up. I'm sorry.

Q: Yes. I was just going to ask you about, like, the work that you did, like the Ellsberg Paradox on risk.

A: Well, maybe I'll try to sum that up a little bit. Put in context, here. When the Pentagon Papers came out and I became notorious, people would, if they knew Dan Ellsberg, they would describe Dan Ellsberg, and if they were people with clearances, which was everybody at I knew, at that point. All the males I knew, essentially. They had strong reason to differentiate themselves from me. Distance themselves. I understood this. And it was inevitable. I think they were sincere, many of them, in putting me down in ways they would never have done a month earlier, or, let's say, a year earlier.

Anyone who said that I was a reliable, good person who had done the right thing could look for a different line of work at that point. He would lose his clearance if there was any hint that he might be inspired to do what I'd done, which was to put out, in my case, 7,000 pages of Top Secret documents. Essentially everybody I knew had a clearance. And they could not keep that clearance if they indicated any admiration or sympathy or understanding of what I had done, or any connection with me at all.

So all those friends disappeared from my life, actually.

Q: Are they permanently gone?

A: Until the Cold War ended. It was as if I had emigrated or gone to the moon or something, or they had. And this, by the way, turns out to be a very reliable experience of whistleblowers. Even in the corporate world. Even if they don't have to have clearances, they're just poison from then on to their old colleagues. Typhoid Mary. Can't have any association with them. The reason I mentioned that is that I often found myself described as a "true believer." As somebody who was always sure that what he was saying at the moment was

right. Was always sure of what he was saying. Whatever it was. And that, I was one with serial beliefs, that I would change my mind often, but that each time I was sure of what I was saying.

Apparently, my wife tells me, I do give that impression. Something about my rhetoric. Or the way I present what I'm saying, does, she feels, fairly often give that impression that I'm absolutely sure that I'm on the right track or that I knew what the answer is, or something.

She knows, and my children know, anybody who knows me well, knows that that could hardly be further from the truth, about my actual attitudes. I don't know anybody who is more conscious of the uncertainties of any given situation. And how to deal with those uncertainties, how to make decisions in the light of uncertainty. It's been one of the interests of my life, but it's also, practically speaking, it's the way I live. Now not to be paralyzed by uncertainty, but how to give credit, full range to uncertainty.

I was constantly in the government in the position of advising people, when I was a consultant, or when I was in the government. To generalize here, things are more uncertain than you realize. Whatever you think the uncertainties are, they're greater than that. And here's how to reduce them. But you can't reduce them entirely. Here's how to live with them, somehow. Deal with it. That's my professional, intellectual life work.

So my undergraduate honors thesis was the title, "Rational Decision-Making Under Uncertainty: The Contributions of von Neumann and Morgenstern," who had done work, who had invented game theory and decision theory. My Ph.D. thesis, years later, was "Risk, Ambiguity, and Decision." My work. And the notion of ambiguity was a concept I gave a technical meaning.

Where risk was regarded as uncertainty that could be represented by probabilities, I gave meaning, operational meaning to the notion of ambiguity, a pervasive set of affairs, where the

uncertainty is more ambiguous, is more vague, inchoate, and cannot even be behaviorally represented by probabilities, by subjective probabilities or betting odds. It was, for reasons I won't go into here, a very heretical point of view, because the new paradigm among statisticians and probability theorists was that, although my notion of ambiguity was a very common one - every man in the street would find that very commonsensical - the statisticians had come to accept a point of view that there was a way to reduce all uncertainties to probabilities. It's not intuitive. It was counterintuitive. But it was a brilliant intellectual framework that had been built up by a guy in particular named L.J. Savage. Leonard Savage.

So really hip people, the sophisticated, understood that, although it might seem that this is too vague to be captured by a probability, you really can represent it by a probability more than you realize. And my thesis was on the theme - came out of an article that I did in 1961, I think - was, you're wrong. And I was saying that to the smartest people I have ever met. These are the smartest brains - the people who did this decision theory - that I have ever met. And I was, in effect, saying, you're all wrong. Actually you can't represent them all by probabilities. There are uncertainties that even a very rational person will not - can't be reduced to a probability.

Very little of this is very meaningful to an ordinary person, because they haven't absorbed the idea that you should represent it by a probability. Actually the thesis, I never published at the time, because I thought it was too long, and had to be reduced. It got published two years ago. At Harvard, Robert ^{Nozick} Nozick came across it. Said, "My God, this is really great. I have a series on Distinguished Theses," which were all current theses. "And I want to publish ~~your~~ yours." This is 39 years later. And so it turned out that it was typed and they couldn't scan it very well, and they had to retype the whole thesis because, of course, it wasn't on a computer. It wasn't electronic, so they had to retype this whole thing. It came out two years ago and now ranks about on the Amazon hit list, it's about 1,500,000 down the list. And expensive - \$65. They may have overpriced it a little bit.

So the point here, though, is - it always was irritating to me, which still happens. That I am perceived, by the people who understand me, as somebody who thinks I'm right, or thinks one can know for certain, or does know. I change my mind all the time. And I am not so stupid as to forget that I thought something different last year. I always assume I'll think something different next year, to some extent.

And, in fact, nothing intellectually gives me more interest than to discover that I've been wrong on this point or that. It gives me a whole set of new questions. Why was I wrong? Is this a pattern of being wrong in a particular way? Is there a better way to understand this? A new way to understand it? That's what I'm on the watch for. And when I have come across and understanding that I haven't had before - somebody else may have - that excites me. That's my great intellectual interest.

Q: Could you give me some examples of your counterexamples to the commonly-received view about just analyzing risk.

A: You know, it isn't too complicated, but it would take a little bit to - Do you want me to take several minutes? I don't know whether it's really worth it.

Q: Yes, I do.

A: Okay, I'll make a simple form of this. Which is this. Imagine two urns. Statisticians, probability theorists, always talking about urns with balls, that you're pulling a ball out of, as a randomizing device. It's like throwing a die or spinning a roulette wheel or something.

So, say, you have an urn, one urn, with 50 red balls and 50 black balls in it. Okay? And they're stirred all up. And you're blindfolded. You're going to reach in and pull out a ball.

And you say you have 50 of each. That's urn A. In urn B, next to it, you have 100 red or black balls, but you don't know the proportion. There might be 100 red or 100 black, or there might be 70/30, one way or the other. Or whatever. You don't know.

Okay. Question. If I pulled a ball out of one urn. You get out of this urn, either urn. And you guess the color correctly, you get ten dollars. Okay? You with me?

Q: Does it matter how much the amount that you're offered is?

A: It shouldn't. It might. We can try it with different amounts. This experiment, by the way, effectively has been done now like 1000 times, by people. It's very counterintuitive to probabilists. In other words, I don't know about, let's just say an ordinary person, but I'll show you how it works. You pull the ball out now and if you guess whether it's red or black, you get ten dollars, or 100 dollars, if that'll make it more interesting for you. Okay? Are you with me?

Q: Yes.

A: The choice is between pulling a ball out of this urn, red or black, and pulling a ball out of this urn, where you don't know the proportion. One, do you prefer to bet on red from this urn, or red from this urn, or are you indifferent between the two? You can do it either way. Red from urn one. Red from urn two. Do you have a preference? You have to tell me. Or you could say, I don't care.

Q: My preference, actually, is for the uncertainty.

A: What? I can't hear too well.

Q: My preference is for the uncertain one. But, say my preference -

A: No, say what your preference is. Don't reason it out.

Q: It is for the uncertain one.

A: Okay, that's fine.

Q: Because I think I have a chance of winning.

A: Okay. That's fine. So, you'd rather bet on this urn. Red on this urn? Okay? From the uncertain urn. That is what I'll call the ambiguous urn. Fine. A. By the way, which would you rather bet on in this urn, red or black?

Q: Having picked -

A: Forget your former choice. This is a different choice.

Q: This is the one where I know it's 50/50?

A: Well, you know there's 50 red balls and 50 black balls mixed up.

Q: Yes.

A: Which would you rather bet on? Red, or black, or are you indifferent?

Q: I'm indifferent.

A: You're indifferent. Okay. This urn. We don't know what the proportion is. Which would you rather bet on, red or black?

Q: I guess I should be indifferent again.

A: Don't say what you should be. Ask what you are.

Q: Yes.

A: Hmm?

Q: I'd say red.

A: You'd say red. You'd rather bet on red. Would you rather get, let's say, \$9.50 on red, rather than \$10 on black? I'm just making it a little - I want to see how close to indifference you are.

Q: No.

A: But if there was ten cents difference, would you prefer one or the other?

Q: Perhaps not.

A: Okay, well, then, let's say that you're effectively indifferent. You like red a little better as a color, I take it?

Q: Yes.

A: Doesn't matter. I'm being a little sloppy here, experimentally. Okay, so you're indifferent between red and black in this urn, and you're indifferent between red and black in this urn. Now, we go back to that first choice. Which would you prefer - and you said you'd rather have red out of this urn than red out of this urn. Okay?

Q: Yes.

A: Still feel that? How about a black ball out of this urn or a black ball out of this urn, the uncertain urn?

Q: I would prefer the black ball.

A: On the uncertain?

Q: Yes.

A: You'd rather still go out of the uncertain urn.

Q: Yes.

A: Okay, I'll show you what the problems are from the point of view of what's called Bayesian statistics, which implies that every uncertainty can be represented by a precise probability. There is no set, there exists no set of probabilities, fractions between zero and one, which will represent those choices you've made. You can't find it. And I'll show you how. The fact that 50 red, 50 black, you're indifferent, can be represented only by one set of probabilities. Half, half. They add up to one. Half and half. Right?

Q: Yes.

A: Likewise here, red and black. Uncertain urn. 50%, 50%. Half and half, right?

Q: Yes.

A: Those are the only probabilities that would fit. But then it can't be that this event, the red ball here, which is 50% probable in your mind, in your betting mind, is preferred to this one, because that would imply that its probability was greater than this. But it's the same, by probability.

Put it another way. If this probability, of the red ball, is greater than the red over here, because you prefer it, you act as if it's more probable, right? And this one is 50%. So you're acting as though this is greater than 50%. Right? Follow that?

Q: Yes.

A: But if you also prefer black from this ambiguous urn, then the complement of red, the opposite, is also more than 50%, more than red. Black, which is 50%.

Q: Not red.

A: Yeah, not red. So, each of these events, red and not red, is each greater than 50%, which is impossible in probability terms. You simply can't represent those choices that you've made in terms of numerical probabilities.

Q: Now did you empirically test this? Did you have subjects?

A: What I did was, I tested it, what they say, anecdotally. In other words, I tested it on lots of people, more or less hypothetically. People were so sure of the theory that said that can't happen, that many psychologists, then, picked that up, since it was an easy experiment to do, and they did it with actual subjects, with actual money, always assuming that they ^{would} ~~were~~ disproved^{it}. They could find something that they could show that this was some false result of some kind, you know. Might look intuitive but it wasn't. It's one of the strongest supported. By the way, you are unusual. You're unusual but not unique in preferring the ambiguous urn, which is 50/50.

There's other conditions where, let's say, the chance of a win, where it's 10 balls to 90 balls, and here you don't know what the proportion is, where people will prefer the ambiguous one. But if it's like 50/50 in each, most people - about two thirds or more - will pick the known urn. That is, the urn with the known probabilities. The known with the risk, we'd call it, over the ambiguous. Some will not. You're not, as I say, unique at all, but it's the minority that will pick that.

Under other conditions, I can make that - and now it's been shown experimentally, people will pick the ambiguous urn nearly every time. So you can define, you can change the experimental conditions and predict how people will go. It's very rare to find an experiment you can change the experimental conditions and predict how people will go. It's very rare to find an experiment in which there is counterintuitive results, where you can get, where you can quote, as they say, replicate^{'d} the results all the time.

And the result of that is that my original article, 1961 article, "Risk, Ambiguity, and Decision," has well over a thousand references in the literature. They've done enormous numbers of experiments on it. They're still doing it. Look at Google. They call it the Ellsberg Paradox. I never used that word, and I don't agree that it's a paradox. I think these

people are behaving in a perfectly explicable way, understandable way, and quite reasonably. Very reasonably.

They call it a paradox because they're so wedded to a set of axioms that they find it paradoxical that you get this behavior. But if you look up Ellsberg Paradox on Google, you'll find, you'll get a lot of recent references, and that article was 40 years ago. And they're still doing experiments with it a lot. They vary, you know, they vary in various ways.

But my point is people's behavior, reasonably, not only predictably, but reasonably, does reflect their appreciation of the difference between a situation where they know a lot, though the outcome is uncertain, but they have a lot of statistics, a lot of data, that shows a pretty clear pattern.

As opposed to a situation which is also uncertain, where they know almost nothing, or where the data is very contradictory, or where it depends on testimony of witnesses, where the judgment of which witness are we coming close to. Ahmed ^{Shalabi} Shalaby, for example, on WMDs. There's a question of deciding whether Ahmed Shalaby, in Iraq, is a fucking charlatan, as State and the CIA believe, and whether you can believe the other witnesses that say there are no WMDs there and his defectors are all lying on that.

And Rumsfeld makes the judgment, no, I put my money on ^{Shalabi} Shalaby. He's telling me what I want to hear, and I believe it's true, and it will justify our going into Iraq, which I want to do, for 11 different reasons. And wishing is believing, specifically, in conditions of great ambiguity.

And the question of WMDs in Iraq, like ICBMs in Russia in 1960, is a situation that can be recognized objectively, more or less, as very ambiguous. You have very little data on it. What data you have is conflicting. It depends on testimony of people whose veracity is very hard

to judge and have self-interest, and where people do look at the same evidence and come up with very different weighing of it. That's an ambiguous situation.

And I would predict, then, that people, in fact, do act differently in that situation than when they are betting on roulette. Again, you know, that seems obvious to, as I say, a non-specialist. But specialists had actually convinced themselves that roulette was an adequate paradigm for every kind of uncertainty situation. And in this one, there's a further thing that I didn't put in my thesis. I conjectured, and I found a good deal of data. It's precisely in objectively ambiguous situations. And when I say objectively I mean there's observable data that defines that situation, such as very contradictory evidence.

Q: Well, give me an example.

A: Well, I'm just giving you an example: WMDs.

Q: Okay.

A: Or ICBMs. Where the weapons of mass destruction. Where one test of it would be where there's a great difference of opinion in weighing the evidence. People will look at the same body of evidence and one person will see this and another person will see that. I'd say, okay, I'll take that as a measure of ambiguity. I never actually published the following conclusion I reached in my studies.

That in that situation, where there are great differences of opinion, those differences will correlate very strongly with interest, with what you want to see. It's precisely in something you can recognize as a very undefined, vague, contradictory, strange situation, where it's natural to get differences, but that's where you'll find that the difference is very much freighted by the result that the seer wants to be there.

In this other situation, like roulette, horse races, where there's a lot of record, people do differ, people do differ on which horse they bet on, or what number they choose to bet on, or whatever. But the differences are much smaller. They can be affected by small changes in the outcomes, in the payoffs. The differences of opinion, as I say, are much different. In that situation, I conjecture - this hasn't been fully tested. I conjecture with some evidence that in this situation there will be differences, but you won't be able to correlate it too much with differences of interest. With which horse you want to win the race.

Of course if you own the horse it may affect it quite a bit. But otherwise, you won't be able to say this person is betting on this person, this horse, is betting on this, and show that that is determined by who they want to win.

Whereas over here, in the WMD case, defectors who want you to invade their homeland, perhaps quite sincerely are going to see a lot more reasons for you to invade the homeland than another person may see. And somebody who wants to attack Iraq is going to decide that this particular witness, Ahmed Shalaby, the immigrant, is a reliable witness. Where somebody else who doesn't want to invade Iraq, or is a little more neutral on the subject, says, "Rely on this guy? He's a convicted embezzler. He's lied every time." The State Department cut him off because he couldn't account for millions and millions of dollars that they'd given him. We don't trust him at all.

I'm saying it's more likely to be the person who doesn't want to invade Iraq who reaches that conclusion than the person who does want to invade Iraq, because ^{Shalaby}Shalaby is giving him the information on which you can rationalize invasion of Iraq. That's just an example.

Also, in the case of ICBMs in Russia, it was not a coincidence entirely that the Army and Navy, in 1960, were taking a footnote to the national intelligence estimate and saying, "We

do not believe that there are more than a handful.” Actually, they said, “a handful of ICBMs in Russia.” And the Air Force was saying 1000. Now right there, that defines a difference. A big difference. You could ask, which of those is arguing against interest? And the answer is neither, in that case. The Air Force wants the Russians to have 1000 missiles, to justify their program of Minutemen missiles, which is 6000, at that point, for the mid and late sixties. The more Russian missiles, the more we need. And the missiles were the property of the Air Force.

Russian missiles do not lead to a buildup of the Army-Navy part of the budget. So their interest is to say they don't have missiles. The U.S. security problem lies elsewhere. It has to be dealt with by carrier airplanes and by Army divisions for their fight in the budget. Now, to say that both have an interest that actually is correlated with their perception and their predictions, does not mean they're equally likely to be wrong, or they're both wrong. In a word by the way, the Army/Navy were exactly right. And they had evidence for that. But the Air Force I can tell you – we worked for the Air Force at RAND. We knew the Army/Navy were saying that, but we gave no credence to it whatsoever. The Air Force people I talked to regarded the Army and Navy people as literal traitors. And not in the usual sense, that they're fighting us for the budget, they say. They're willing to tell this country that there are no missiles over there, except more than a handful, just to keep down our share of the budget. If that doesn't define treason to the national security, what would?

The ones I was talking to - Colonels, Brigadier Generals - sincerely believed the Air Force estimates that the Soviets at that time had hundreds to perhaps a thousand missiles. And, really, they honestly perceived the Navy and the Army as simply willing to ignore the defense interests of the country in order to assert that the Air Force didn't deserve more than a third of the budget.

In fact, the Army-Navy was right, and the evidence was on their side. When McNamara says, by the way, that he talked to the Chief of Staff of Air Intelligence, a very sincere person - when he was the Secretary of Defense - was very honest, and he's certain that person believed. That's so absurd, that's so nonsensical. I find it hard to believe that McNamara is that naïve. But he really was just in to the Defense Department when he made that interrogation.

The Air Force was, in fact, being very cynical about that. Although not all. The people that I talked to at the time, I think, did sincerely believe it, but they'd been hoodwinked by their Chief of Staff of Intelligence, and especially the SAC Chief of Staff of Intelligence.

Q: What you're saying also seems to be about self-fulfilling prophecies.

A: Well, ultimately, yes.

Q: Explain.

A: If we build up our missile force in response to the belief that the Soviets have a large missile force, they will then build up a large missile force in response to our large missile force. And that's a point, by the way, that McNamara has often made. It's a point McNamara is lying about to this day.

McNamara a number of times has said, in a number of arenas, that the problem of the arms race was a problem purely of misunderstanding and worst-case reasoning. Very reasonable, but wrong. We, he said, believed, or assumed that the Soviets had a large missile force. They didn't, but we believed that. That's why I, then, proposed 1000 Minutemen missiles, actually proposed, initially 1600 or 1400. Later came down to 1000. It was something like he proposed 1200 or 1400 and I think the Air Force's minimum proposal was 1600, but they

wanted 6000 a few years off. And he wanted to get them down to 1200 or 1400, with the objective of getting down to 1000, which he did do.

But why as many as 1000? He says, because we misestimated the Soviet force. Having done, as a worst case, regarded them as having 500 to 1000 missiles, we built 1000. Then, of course, they built up. And so it went, from then on. That's a lie, actually. Yes, there was an assumption by the Air Force, early on, and through September of 1961, that the Russians had already at that time 160 missiles, something like that, with others saying much higher figures.

But there's two things wrong with McNamara's statement that that led to our 1000 Minutemen force. Of course he doesn't relate ¹⁶⁰1,260. He says they were going to have more. You know. That's why we went for 1000. Actually, two things. As he spells out in his interview with you, I believe, he's said it elsewhere, he had decided to his own satisfaction early in the year that there was no missile gap except in our favor. So how does that explain his public statements made many times since, that he had to go for 1000 later in the view of a missile gap.

His statements to you were that he had decided by, I believe, March -

Q: Very early.

A: - that there was no missile gap. There's two funny, anomalous aspects to that story. I mean, ironic. You notice that that's the one time in his service to two Presidents, when he actually offered to resign. Said, "I'll resign today." Because he'd embarrassed Kennedy by saying to the press on what he thought was background, "there is no missile gap, and if there is one, it's in our favor." Which he believed to be the truth. And, actually, which was the truth.

That made such a stir because Kennedy had run against the missile gap that Senator Dirksen - though he tells this slightly differently in two versions that he gave to you - I don't know if you noticed that. Did you notice? He tells the Senator Dirksen story a little differently.

In one of his accounts to you, in your transcript, he says, Senator Dirksen had said "I, McNamara, should resign, should be withdrawn," he said. "You should withdraw McNamara and the race should be re-run. The election race should be re-run, because the election was stolen." Remember, it was a paper-thin victory, won by stolen votes, and very largely on the issue of the missile gap. So it wasn't stupid to say that the election had been stolen on that issue.

In another part of your transcript, so he said, "I said to Kennedy, 'look, I've only been here a couple of months and already they're asking me to resign and the race to be re-run. I'm offering to resign now.'" In his other version, it's just a little different. He said, "Dirksen said Kennedy should resign and the race should be re-run." And he said, "I've only been here a couple of months and now they're asking you to resign." Just, I think, it's a mistake in his memory, which I certainly could make any minutes of the day here. His two slightly different versions of that memory.

But in any case, Dirksen was making trouble about it, and Kennedy said, "Don't worry about it. Everybody puts his foot in his mouth. Everybody makes mistakes." What had McNamara done? What was the mistake? The mistake was telling the truth. That's why the issue of resignation arose. Telling the truth about a subject of extreme importance to the country, that it had in fact been the subject of the Presidential campaign that had just been run.

But the truth he was telling contradicted what his new boss had said during the campaign, so that's very embarrassing. "I offer my sword. I resign." If he was Japanese, he could have committed suicide at telling that truth. And the President forgave him.

But there's another side to that story, which is, he implies, in his story, that that changed the intelligence estimates of the United States. Actually, it didn't. The last big missile gap estimates was in June of 1961, months later, in which the CIA said, as I recall - I can't remember the date. You know, this was 40 years ago. But I think the CIA estimate was 120, and I think a higher estimate was State. And this was unusual, where State was actually higher. Hilsman actually said 160. The Army-Navy said a few. This treasonous heresy. But that was not in the body of the NIE. The Army-Navy took a footnote to this estimate. The estimate, the national intelligence estimate, the NIE, is the property of the Director of Central Intelligence. He makes the final decision as what goes in the text.

But if somebody disagrees, and this was unpopular, there was pressure on them not to disagree, they would quote, "take a footnote," and footnote would be in there saying "the Army-Navy disagrees for the following reasons." And they did take a footnote there which seemed they were agreeing with McNamara, in effect. But McNamara had apologized and withdrawn that comment.

And I don't know what McNamara believed at that point. I doubt if he changed his mind. But the official estimate was still that they had 120 to 160. We had 40 Atlas and Titan ICBMs at that time. So, they were three or four to one. Going on hundreds, because the essence of the estimate was, within a couple of years they'll have hundreds more. Faster than we can have them.

That summer - that was in June - In August I went out to SAC headquarters to discuss with the Chief of War Plans, who I knew from the Pentagon, he'd been transferred to Omaha, to

discuss how they received new directives on the war plans that I had drafted for McNamara. So, this is a little complicated here, but I drafted this directive to SAC - It's a big deal here, you know, I'm a 30-year-old and so forth, but above all, I had written the directive that I wanted.

Actually, I thought of this plan I wrote, and the directive, as I would never have such a high point of a career, I had changed the war plan in a direction that I thought was right, which was endorsed by McNamara. So I wanted to see how SAC would regard it. And I talked to Dave ^{Leibman} ~~Lehman~~, the colonel in charge of the war plans. And we talked about that. And then we talked about the missile gap, which, as far as the NIE concerned, there was still a missile gap.

And, by the way, I assumed that to be true. I thought the Army and Navy, I'd been indoctrinated with the notion from the Air Force that they were just bureaucratically totally irresponsible to a point that was hard to define other than as high treason. And I thought everybody understood the Air Force is probably exaggerating, in their interest of getting more missiles. Maybe they don't have 120 or 160, but more than we do.

And Kennedy had virtually, by the way, despite McNamara, had conceded to Khrushchev in Vienna that, let us say we are equal. And that wasn't what the estimates said. Said, let us say we are equal. And Khrushchev said, in Vienna, "I'm glad to hear you say that." No President has admitted that before. "My generals tell me we are far ahead. But, let's for argument, take your figure. We are equal. Let's go from there." And they were discussing the Berlin issue. Okay, equal.

I go to Offut and Lehman tells me, on the missile gap, "You know what the old man thinks they have?" And I said, "No, what?" That's Thomas Power, who had replaced LeMay as head of the Strategic Air Command. "Tell me." He says, "A thousand."

Now, another thing we discussed was the fact that the Joint Chiefs, pressed by SAC, but the Joint Chiefs had told Kennedy during the missile crisis that summer that - and we were on mobilization - we'd mobilized reserves, made threats, we were studying a civil defense program against the Russian missiles. That was in July, I believe was that speech.

So here we are in super crisis. And the Joint Chiefs have said, if worse comes to worst then we have to launch a first strike.

Q: We have to stop for a second, sorry. I'd just like to finish this, if we could.

A: You got a tape? You're out of tape, or what? I'll just finish this story and I'll quit. It's a good story.

END OF RECORDING

Q: Here's one question before we stop, because when you were describing probabilities, risk, there's one thing right at the heart of that that particularly interests me. Because you talk about lying, and you also talk about self-deception. Where does lying end and self-deception begin, and vice-versa?

A: It seems clear to me, and I thought a lot about it, there's no dividing line, even a vague dividing line. They're inter-penetrated. They go together.

Q: What is?

A: The self deception and lying, very often. The government officials like to say, we really don't lie. We don't lie. We may not tell the whole truth. We may slant it, we may do this and

that. We of course are mistaken very often. But we really don't lie, because if we're caught, it would be very serious.

That's a lie. They very often do consciously say something virtually opposite of what they believe to be the truth. But that's not all they do. Of course, they also deceive themselves, and they lie to each other, and they lie to themselves. And on any given point, there's usually a combination of mistake, error, lie - often there's no direct lie. Clinton would tell you that he never lied. He was being misleading a great deal, and some of it was just a lie. He says "I never had sex with that woman," he had a meaning of sex in his mind which apparently is regional. Regional has some validity, as they say. I heard a man tell me, "Where I come from is the same state Clinton comes from, 'eatin' ain't cheatin'." He told me that. And that was my first introduction to the thought maybe Clinton doesn't think he's lying about this.

But he lied about other things. And, in particular, very importantly, was he totally lying, or deceiving himself, or being wishful, when he attacked with his cruise missiles, a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan on the belief that it was a biological warfare laboratory on the very day that Monica went to the grand jury, which definitely took the headlines away from Monica that day? And delayed the impeachment vote by some reason.

What Sy Hersh brought out, by the way, was that, whether they honestly believed or not that there was a biological warfare laboratory in Sudan, where they convinced themselves of that, the evidence was extremely thin. And there were other people, in CIA and elsewhere, who were telling the White House, who were not at all convinced by this evidence. We don't know enough about where your evidence came from and who delivered it and everything else. This is very, very thin evidence, and we're not sure at all.

It turned out it was not a biological warfare laboratory. As in the case of Bush's WMDs, the statement which the White House made over and over, "We have unequivocal evidence" was as much of a lie as the statement that Rumsfeld made: "We have bulletproof evidence" of a link between Saddam and Al Qaeda. The point was not that they had no evidence. The point was that the evidence was very contradictory, vague, insubstantial, and they pretended it was very substantial.

Same on the WMDs, in general. Weapons of mass destruction. As far as we can tell now, there weren't any. And that, by the way, seems to have been a genuine error by most of the intelligence agencies. They did mostly assume they had some. But also, I've said, our belief is not based on very solid evidence. It turned out to be wrong. When Rumsfeld, again, or Cheney, would say, "it's unequivocal" - that's a lie. And it's a lie just as much as when McNamara said we have unequivocal evidence on August 4 of an attack on our ship.

There was evidence. There are people who, to this day, sailors on board the Maddox or the Turner Joy, who still believe that they were personally under attack by torpedoes on the night of August 4. People still living will say, "I saw this, I saw that." Are they 100% wrong? Who can know for sure. But certainly to say that that evidence was unequivocal was a lie, and it almost surely was wrong.

By the way, I think McNamara wishfully, very strong incentive, managed to believe until 1995 that General Vo Nguyen Giap would tell him there was an attack. You can't really prove a negative, that there was no attack. You had these various people thinking there had been an attack. He wanted very much to have it confirmed that, after all, he hadn't wholly made this thing up, and have it proved there really was an attack.

Strictly speaking, even if there was an attack, he did a lot of lying and it's not clear that his judgment would have been right, to what evidence did he go on. You know, what evidence

was there? But he wanted General Giap to say there had been an attack. And I know someone who talked to him on that trip who told me that McNamara made it clear to him he had a hope that he would find out from that trip that there had been an attack.

In other words, he was not sure. Well, nobody can be sure. But he had a wish to that, and when Giap said to him there was no attack, that ended the hope he nursed for 30 years. So he immediately reported there was no attack.

Now a year earlier, he had said in his book, *In Retrospect*, the evidence is very probable, is strong on the side that there was an attack, but it's possible there wasn't. That was an absurd statement. He couldn't have believed that. That the evidence, the preponderance of evidence - he was almost the last person one could identify in the country who believed even that there might have been an attack at that point.

So a statement that no one could prove wrong would have been to say, "By now, nearly everybody agrees that all the evidence for an attack was wrong. But there is still some possibility that there was an attack." Nobody could deny that. That would have been a sustainable statement. So he was clearly lying when he said the preponderance of evidence as of 1995, the preponderance of evidence was in favor of an attack in 1995. How could one statement by a virtually senile Vo Nguyen Giap, the commander of the forces that had defeated him, reverse that. Vo Nguyen Giap wins. Giap can't lie? Come on! He's a general! He's an official! What weight does that have? But it had enough weight to sway McNamara over to the idea there was no attack for the first time in 1995. That's 30, what is it? Thirty-one years after the attack. Most people had been convinced of that within a week inside the government.

That tells me McNamara did think there was a chance there was an attack, but it wasn't a preponderance. He had a very weak belief and a statement by Vo Nguyen Giap managed to overturn it. That's my understanding of the way inference works, or subjective probability.

Q: But when you say lying, the term lying, what it conjures up in my mind is that someone has intentionally told an untruth -

A: Yes. With intent to deceive.

Q: With intent to deceive - thank you very much, sir.

A: Yeah. Happens every day.

Q: And but when someone is self-deceived, perhaps they have -

A: They can be both self-deceived and lying. Hell, they may be telling the truth and think they're lying.

Q: But why are you so convinced, say, in McNamara's case, first of all, you seem to say that he was self-deceived because he had that wishful thought that it had happened, and wanted to find some confirmation of that fact.

A: When I sat with Robert McNamara on his KC-135, on the way back from Saigon, in a tanker that he had constructed for his use so that he could make a one-way trip to Saigon without refueling, and back without refueling. I went over with him in October of '65 to brief Nick Katzenbach, who had just joined the State Department, and I came back with him a week later to Washington, in October of 1965.

McNamara, as we were approaching Andrews Air Force Base, the end of the trip, calls me. He had spent the way over reading memos by me. It was the high point of my bureaucratic career. There was nothing, no parallel to this. Here were all these people on this tanker, it was like a 17-hour trip or something, and they had not brought much to read. I don't know why. Maybe they expected to sleep.

I had this huge stack of memos that I'd brought home from Vietnam to show people in Washington. So, since they didn't have anything to read, I started passing them to John McNaughton, my former boss, who was sitting across the aisle from McNamara, who was sitting next to General Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. So I had the pleasure of seeing McNaughton turning my memos page by page reading them, which I never saw as a year as a special assistant.

I would hand in a memo like any special assistant, never know for sure whether he actually read it. Let alone pass it to McNamara. He was passing them to McNamara. And I could watch. I sat there. It was just wonderful, watching McNamara read, I had, maybe 70 pages single-spaced, of memos. And reading my memos. It was just marvelous. So he had a very good understanding on the trip over, as to what I thought about the situation in Vietnam. I had this whole series of reports.

And he had known me, this is now 1966. I had met him in '61. I wrote speeches for him in '64, '62. I met him on a handful of occasions only, so I didn't know him well, but he knew who I was. And so on the way back, he calls me to the rear of the plane. As you know, this is in my book. But I'll tell you the story. And says, "Dan, I'm having an argument here with Bob Komer, and Komer was a former CIA guy who now worked for Johnson on the National Security Council staff.

I'd known him since about '59. We'd done a lot of work together. So he was now reporting to the President on pacification in Vietnam. Later he took charge of it a year later in Vietnam.

So he says, "Komer," he says, "Bob here says that the situation is improving in Saigon, and I saw it's getting worse. You can settle this matter." He Says, "You settle it, Dan. What do you say?" I said, "Well, Mr. Secretary, I would say my overwhelming impression is how much the same things are as they were a year ago. They were pretty bad then and I would say they're about the same now."

McNamara said, "There, you see. That proves my point. That proves my point. We've put another 100,000 men in and the situation is no better than it was before. That shows that fundamentally, underneath, things are worse." And I said, "Well," I said, "You could say that. That's an interesting way to think of it." And, as I said that, the pilot says, "Gentlemen, take your seats" - bucket seats we had there. I think they were chairs, actually, on this one. "Take your seats, fasten your seat belts. We're coming into Andrews."

And 10 minutes later, the plane goes into a steep descent. Ten minutes later we're on the ground, after this conversation. The doors open, McNamara goes out first, strides over to a bank of microphones. And it was a foggy day, slightly rainy. And McNaughton and I file out afterwards, and General Wheeler is standing behind him. And he's saying into these microphones almost to start off, "Gentlemen, I've just returned from an inspection tour in Vietnam, and I'm happy to say that, on every dimension, we're making a great deal of progress. Things are really moving ahead there. Making great progress."

And I remember standing there thinking, "Wow. I'd never seen a transition, a contradiction, quite that fast." And I remember actually writing to Patricia at that time, I think it was tape

even. We used to send tapes to each other. And saying, "I hope I never have a job that calls on me to do that."

Q: To do what, exactly?

A: To lie that much to the public on a serious matter that the public deserves to know. He did not believe that there was progress in Vietnam, he was reporting to the President in his October memo right from that disaster, things are deteriorating everywhere you look. I'll need more men in '66, or get out. The chances are 50/50 that two years from now - which is the election year - two years from now we will be at a stalemate at a much higher level of hostilities. Which is what happened.

The 50/50. I think, by the way, that that was just to sound realistic. A better estimate would have been 90 to 10, 9 to 1 odds that we will be at a stalemate, and I think that's probably what he believed. But 50/50 already was heresy as far as the government was concerned. To be telling the public, as the President now, and as the generals now, up to two days ago, have been telling the American public this year that the opposition we're facing is declining, we are making overall progress, is, I'm sure, totally contrary to the reports they're getting.

Did Bush believe that? Maybe. Rumsfeld didn't. It's clear from the memo that was leaked from Rumsfeld that he's reached a point like McNamara where he was at least telling his private associates the situation is not progressing, is not rosy, and it looks very dangerous. Two days ago the general then said, "We're in a war." Which was new. We're not facing ragtag remnants of torturers. We're facing a nationalist resistance, which is opposing our occupation.

Likewise, when McNamara said, constantly, all the time - "Progress, progress, progress" - he did not believe that. If there had been progress he would have been wrong in his private views. He didn't believe there was progress, but he said progress. That was a lie.

Q: Do you think that people can hold a contradiction in their head?

A: Of course. Who was it who said that is the mark of a first-rate mind is to be able to hold several, contradictory ideas in their head at one moment. Sure. Am I saying, in other words, that people always know what they believe or always - what I am saying, I don't want to say that all the important misleading statements are lies. By no means. I am saying, though, that it's important to understand, and I think no one in the public that I've ever met - no one, no reporter I've ever met, no matter how hard-bitten and cynical and experienced, like my friend Sy Hersh. I've told him again and again, "Sy, I don't believe you have any idea of how much you are lied to and how much you believe." And he's an investigative reporter who exposes lies for a living. I have no doubt that Sy Hersh can be conned as much as any other reporter, and is. Happens all the time. I'm sure of that.

Q: Well, maybe lying is just part of the human condition.

A: Yes, of course. We're an animal that lies. But knowing that is a first step toward finding out and arriving at a better opinion than you will get from your officials or your Catholic priests or bishops, or Enron officials, or WorldCom, or Tyco. Or FBI directors, or you name it. Tobacco companies.

The lying by tobacco companies, which was exposed by a couple of whistle-blowers - just two, really, Merrill Williams and Jeffrey Wigand. Williams gave 4,000 pages of documents to the press and Congress and lawyers, which he came across - the same number of pages I gave to the *New York Times* in '61, which showed that what Jeffrey Wigand was saying as a former

official of Brown and Williamson was true, namely that the companies had known, contrary to their sworn oath - I think it was seven company officials in a picture with their hands raised, swearing to the statement that each of them had no knowledge, no evidence, that their product was either carcinogenic or addictive. And they swore that they were not consciously marketing it to teenagers.

These documents show what Wigand knew as head of research for Brown and Williamson: each of them was lying. They not only had been told, they knew. They had been told this over and over again, and it was proved in documents. Now that was the basis for all these suits that have been coming since. The class action suits. We're not talking about the government now, or classification. We are talking about a product that kills, as they knew, 450,000 people a year from cancer, from smoking. Not just cancer. Primarily heart disease and various other problems. Emphysema, but also cancer.

Fifty thousand more secondary smoke, from inhaling other people's smoke. Five hundred thousand. That's more each year die from smoking than all the wars of American history put together except the Civil War.

So the people who gave up their careers, as they saw it faced slander, which they got; faced a possible indictment, prosecutions, injunctions in the case of Merrill Williams, played a role, did what they could to reduce that toll, which is 500,000 in the U.S. alone every year. Should we trust tobacco company executives? What they say? No, we all know that.

Should we trust government officials more? I'm saying no. They come from companies like tobacco companies, they're pretty much the same. How about, surely we can trust them more than Catholic priests or Catholic bishops. More? That sounds ridiculous. Surely not more. But the Catholic priests and bishops, nearly all of them must have known that children were being not just fondled and caressed by their Catholic priest, which is a terribly serious thing

right away for a Catholic child, but in many cases raped by priests. Mainly boys, some girls. Raped. And their lives enormously affected.

How many priests knew that that was going on? Not only in the past, which couldn't be changed, although you could help the victims if you decided to stop denying that they were victims, but knew that it was going to go on in the future, with the connivance of the Catholic hierarchy, which was transferring priests that they knew, by confession and accusation and admission. they knew they were abusing these children, and they transferred them to other parishes without admitting, without telling the parish that that was happening, to keep them away from prosecution.

They denied the victims' claims; they fought them at every point. This is the Catholic Church, the largest denomination in this country, and one, by the way, that presumes to speak to politicians and the whole country with authority on morals, on sex, marriage, adultery, homosexuality. A hierarchy of which a significant fraction is homosexual, which is all right except that they all have to deny it, in the closet. But not just homosexual, not just pederasts - Child rapists.

How many of those priests should have gone outside their own institution and hierarchy in disobedience to their own identity and their vows and their orders from their bishops, to tell a victim's family or a prosecutor, or the press, or the Congress. And how many did do that? To my knowledge: None. And we're talking about thousands and thousands of people. Not one saw their responsibility as to protect children that they knew were being abused in this way by telling the truth in a way that would ruin their own careers and contradict their own identity as loyal servants of the Church. That's not a good record, but it is a human record. That performance is very human.

That's what we have to understand, I think, about the predicament our species is in. And when we're talking about threats of nuclear war, to think that we are dealt with better by government officials who know of terrible, terrible dangers that are being run in our name. To think that we're better in the hands of the government officials than a Catholic parent or child with respect to their Parish priest, is mistaken.

That means we have to protect ourselves. We have to protect other species and the rest of our own species in ways that are not premised upon taking the word of an official or a corporate official or a member of a hierarchy at all as the last word. Anybody. So what's left? What's left is to inform ourselves as best we can. And there's lots of ways of doing it, without taking the official word. Not to ignore it. Not to ignore what the official says, but to understand they can be wrong, they can be ill-informed, despite the information apparatus at their disposal. They can deceive themselves, they can be wishful, they can be ignorant, and they can lie. And they do lie, all the time. Given that, their evidence is not the last word. You have to look at the interests involved, you have to inform yourself otherwise. And you have to be willing to take action if you really want to change the situation that goes beyond your own business as usual as a citizen.

It includes voting, it includes a lot of potentials beyond voting. Campaign contributions, campaign work; but also, which I don't dismiss at all, with the highest importance, demonstrations, nonviolent civil disobedience, whistle-blowing in particular. And, as I've indicated, not only for people in the government.

Merrill Williams was a part-time paralegal worker, out of work. He was an English instructor. He was gathering a little extra cash by working for Brown and Williamson to find documents in their files that were particularly incriminating so they could destroy them or send them to London, or give them to a lawyer where they'd be protected by lawyer-client privilege.

He looked at it and he thought he was taking part in a process of murder. Murder. That's how he saw it. It's how I saw it, what I was part of in 1969. So he said, "I got a fit of Gandhism." And he began taking those documents, the incriminating ones, out of the loft where he was working, and copying them, and giving them to Congress and others, just essentially as I did.

He was not a person with clearances. How many people in the country are there who are in a position where at some point in their life they could do that, where they could save lives by telling truths that their boss doesn't want told. It can't be done without significant risk to your job, to your career, that means to your family's well being, to your children's education. To the survival of your marriage. Because the economic pressures of being a whistleblower, mostly destroy marriages. I'm one of the lucky ones here.

Very few antiwar couples came out of a trial or prison with their marriage together. I'm one of the rare ones. So I'm very lucky about that. Our marriage was brought closer, if anything, by our trial experience, and it's kept us together ever since. We owe each other. I owe her, so much partnership, and so much shared courage and experience.

But that's not what's to be expected. The costs of telling truths that your organization or boss don't want told is very real. And generally very high. The possibility of saving a lot of lives by telling those truths is pervasive. All around. It isn't always lives that are at stake. It's not clear that taking those risks where human lives are not at stake is really very often worthwhile. The costs are just as great if it's just money, it's embezzlement, if it's wrong spending or something. I don't think I would advise people to think very hard about giving up their career to expose that.

Nuclear radiation cases, automotive safety, as I say, tobacco, asbestos, drugs and various things. But above all, in national security. Lives are at stake routinely. Big lives, lot of lives.

I would like to see people consider doing what I wish I'd done in 1961 or 1960 or '64 or '65. In '60, '61 it would have had to do with nuclear weapons. I wish I had taken all the documents in my safe, all the memos I myself wrote that were top secret, which most people at RAND didn't know I'd written. We didn't look at each other's Top Secret documents very much. Not very many people had written Top Secret documents at RAND. Most of my RAND colleagues didn't know most of what I'd written, mostly Top Secret.

I wish I'd taken all that and put it out in 1960. And I didn't. There's no counting how many lives may be affected by my failure to do that. I wish that I had taken the documents in my safe in 1964 and '65, before the bombs started falling. Before the troops had gone over in great numbers.

The counterpart I would say to someone today, I wish there had been a lot more documentary truth-telling before the troops went into Iraq. But it's not too late now. It wasn't too late even in '69 or in '71. But it was late. It was harder for it to have any effect.

So I would ask people who know that we are being lied into a war, that enormous risks are being taken in their name for unjustified reasons, for domestic political reasons, for service reasons, for saving face reasons, to consider documenting that fact, if they can. And there are a thousand people at any time who can, copying those documents or taking them to the press and Congress both. Each is necessary. Not just Congress. I did that in '69. It wasn't enough. It didn't go anywhere. Nothing happened until I gave them to the press. But even then the documents I had to give, by '69 were all, almost all, historical. I didn't expect them to have much effect. And they didn't.

By themselves, the history I put out would not have affected the war at all. It was Nixon's fear that I had current documents on him that I would put out that led him to take criminal actions that brought him down and actually did shorten the war. And, although I didn't

foresee that, precisely, couldn't have precisely, it was not exactly coincidental. He had good, strong reason to fear - not paranoid - that I could have put out documents on him. I had some, but not as much as he feared. And he would take special measures to stop me, including incapacitating me, finally.

That was very reasonable thinking. I think any President in his position would have done the same. And it brought him down. He was likely to get away with it, but he didn't.

So an act of truth-telling, even of history, can have unforeseeable effects, very powerful effects - can save lives. That's all I can say. There's no guarantee. So I'm saying to these people every occasion I've had in the last year. I never let a lecture go by, wherever, in Utah, Nevada, in Nevada, or California. I'd rather do it in Washington, where there's a better chance of hitting somebody in the Pentagon, to listen. But I say, in case somebody has a relative, consider doing what I wish I'd done in '64, '65, tell the truth to Congress and the press with documents at whatever cost to yourself.

The cost will probably be high, but there's a war's worth of lives at stake. And you can save them.

Q: I think we should stop for the evening. Thank you very, very much

DAY 2

A: Are we on?

Q: Yeah.

A: I was waiting for you to tell me. Yes, that was in the Spring of 1968.

Q: I'm sorry. I just need my earphones, which I don't have on. Okay, sorry.

A: In the Spring of 1968, just following the Tet offensive, I knew that there was pressure from Westmoreland in the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, MACV, for expanding the war. He'd been giving clear signals of that, including speeches even - where he indicated this in backgrounders to press in November of '67 - that he wanted permission to go into the so-called sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia. In other words, expand the war into these other two countries, which were supposedly neutral at this point, but were being used by the Communists and the NLF as staging areas and as lines of communication down to South Vietnam.

And the Joint Chiefs had favored this expansion, going all the way back to '64, and even '61. We were moving now, we had 550,000, or, I think, actually, at that moment, 500,000 troops in South Vietnam. And the Vietnamese had just carried off an offensive, the Tet offensive, starting on the night of January 30 and 31 and extending into the first of February and later, which was described by Peter Arnett with the following lead, I remember, on his Associated Press story: "Last night, in an act of desperation, the Communists occupied 38 of the 43 province capitals of South Vietnam."

And that was an inside joke for people who knew that Westmoreland was in the habit of describing any spectacular VC exploit as "an act of desperation," something that is very familiar just now in Iraq. Whenever American soldiers are killed by unknown assailants, it's described as "an act of desperation."

Well, in this act of desperation, they had flooded all over the district capitals in the province capitals of Vietnam, in a way that really no one had supposed they were capable of doing. And, as Walter Cronkite was soon to conclude from a trip there and to announce on evening

television, “it is clear that we are stalemated.” The Tet offensive didn’t show we could be pushed out of Vietnam, and there was no way for them to do that, but it showed that all talk of progress and of control of the countryside was totally delusional, which I had known from my own inspection in ’66 and ’67 and had reported.

I knew then that the pressure in the wake of Tet to recoup by doing what the Joint Chiefs had always wanted to do - and that was to go into at least the southern part of North Vietnam - would be very intense. To cut off the so-called “infiltration routes.” I was sure that that would not win the war or end the war, but would put us, would breach that threshold, would put us inside North Vietnam, and lead almost inevitably to the next step: an Inchon-like landing that MacArthur had made in Korea. A sea landing in the vicinity of Haiphong or Hanoi, an inward march to Hanoi, and an occupation of the northern part, all of North Vietnam up to the Chinese border, which the CIA had always pointed out would almost surely bring in Chinese troops. This was not just a reaction to Tet. This was a looking almost by the JCS and MACV as an opportunity posed by Tet, a good excuse to do what they’d been proposing for four years at that point.

Q: Was there a moment when this clicked that you should do something, you should leak a document? Was there sort of an epiphany, or a moment--

A: Yeah. Yes. Well, the idea of leaking something had really never occurred to me. I’d spent a career - this is now 1968 - I’d been dealing with classified documents since 1958, for 10 years. And I’d made many promises and oaths not to reveal classified material to any unauthorized person. I’d been warned that that would involve violating - I was told - aspects of the espionage act, and that I’d be prosecuted for it.

But more than that, I thought of myself all this time as someone who served Presidents, even when I was a lowly Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. We thought of ourselves as a kind of

President's guard, and we would fight the country he told us to fight, whether it was Egypt or Israel, back in the Suez Crisis.

So the idea of doing something - getting something out that the President didn't want out, just went against my identity as a President's man, which was shared by all these people. Not that we were that close to Presidents. It's an aura that's extended to almost everybody in the Executive Branch or in the service, especially elite units like the Marines, who think of themselves as a ready force, ready to go where the President wants.

But that's also true, here I was, very far from Presidents. I'd never really met one. I'd seen them only at distance, but I worked for the President. That was my identity. And to do something that would clearly be against the wishes of the President was very different from, let's say, giving information to the President that had been withheld from him by his subordinates, the generals, bypassing the chain of command. That, I'd done a lot of in '61 and '62. I was getting information from persons not authorized to receive it, namely the Secretary of Defense, or the President. It was not intended by the Air Force or others that I should show those people classified documents, which they had no intention of giving to the President. That's an earlier story.

But to go against the President himself? That was a change. So, why do this? At a certain point I knew that I saw a document that I wasn't supposed to see, but that was routine at my level. I was called in, actually--

Q: Sorry, what was routine?

A: It was routine to see documents where my name was not among the addressees. And supposedly those documents were "eyes only," to be seen only by certain designated people. When I worked for McNaughton, a third of what I read was "eyes only." This was the kind

of stuff that went to the Assistant Secretary. My name wasn't on that document. And his name was often not on the document as addressee. But he was seeing a copy of it that was being given to him anyway.

In other words, that violation of the rules, of the designation was absolutely routine. The point being that this kind of secrecy system, only Top Secret, allows for a lot of discretion. It doesn't mean that you really don't show it to anybody who's not addressed. It means you have to use good judgment. And if you don't have that good judgment, *you can't do your job*, you don't show it to someone without a clearance. That's another matter altogether. But if this person has a clearance, you may decide that he - almost all male here - has a need to know that the originators of that document don't know about it, and you do share that. And if your judgment is bad, you lose your job or your access. But that kind of judgment is routine.

Q: So you were routinely reading--

A: I was routinely reading things that in many cases the originators would have been very unhappy that I was reading. Not because they distrusted me as a person, but because they understand that, to keep this from getting to the wrong people: the other service, Congress, the other party in Congress, the public at large. The chance of that happening is somewhat related to the number of people who have seen this. And the more people who see a document - there may be six addressees on that document, eyes only. That generally would mean that no more than 30 people would actually see it, including secretaries who handle it, and special assistants, who need to see everything their boss sees, almost everything. And other people that he gives it to. That would be a very restricted handling, that something would only be seen by 30 or 40 people. There's occasionally a piece of paper that will say, "for eyes only for the President." I've handled paper like that. Not very often.

But it isn't just the President who's going to see that, actually. That's why they're so careful what is written down under any circumstances. It's not random what doesn't get written down. What doesn't get written down is the most damaging, the most potentially damaging information - politically, legally, diplomatically. But diplomatically is the least of it. Information that might hurt your budget in Congress is among the most sensitive of all information and it doesn't get written down, because it might leak to a Congressman, whether he had a clearance or not.

Okay, we come back, then. I knew that Westmoreland had, in the words of General Wheeler, the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff - Wheeler had come back in February with a report from Vietnam. I was reading this because I was in town to be part of a task force looking at new strategies in Vietnam, alternative strategies, actually, under the new Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford. And I think I was the only person not in the government - I was from Rand - who was in that task force in the Defense Department.

So, I actually saw this report from Wheeler, which was relatively very closely held for the President. And in it, he said that Westmoreland had asked for 206,000 more troops. This was in the wake, now, of the Tet offensive.

Q: How many troops were already there at this time?

A: Five hundred thousand. So this had several implications. It would carry you into the field of several hundred thousand troops, but what Westmoreland revealed later and, not to my surprise, and what was knowable within the building at that time was, two things: he wanted those troops in order to invade the southern part, at least, of North Vietnam. He wanted to expand the war into Laos, Cambodia, and southern part - when I say the southern part - the neck of North Vietnam, inward from the port of Vinh, that would cut across the infiltration routes going into Laos. Supposedly stop the infiltration. He had wanted this for a

long time. He had vested interest once before in late November and December. Here we were now in February. Late February. So he was just making it in.

Another point was that the 206,000 was not a new request. He'd made exactly that request, almost exactly the same figure, in May - first in February, but then in May of 1967, a whole year earlier. And his argument at that time was that the time had come to expand the war. There was one other implication to this. You had to mobilize.

McNamara had performed a virtuoso feat of getting 500,000 troops into Vietnam without going to Congress and asking for mobilization of reserves. I think in '61, or even '64, no one would have said that he could scrape those troops together and get them over there without mobilizing. And the Chiefs - and, in fact, he had initially recommended mobilizing. Johnson said no. That would trigger a debate in Congress. He had to have approval of Congress for that. And he didn't want a debate in Congress for several reasons. One, that it might press people to get *it* out of Vietnam, and the other, that some people would press, with the Joint Chiefs, would press for a total invasion, get the war over. Do it right. Go all out. Meaning, invade North Vietnam and risk war with China, which would almost certainly go nuclear.

Johnson and McNamara were very determined to avoid that. But not to the point of creating the political problems that would be involved in getting out, losing, being defeated. And so they pursued a strategy, which really had had now, since '64, two requirements, met two requirements: you stayed in Vietnam, you didn't get defeated. But that could have been done at much lower levels than we actually committed. Two, keep the Joint Chiefs from resigning en masse or going public with their complaints and their requests for an all-out attack, claiming that American lives were being sacrificed needlessly, and that the only way to win this war was to do what they had been saying for four years: hit all 94 targets on their list simultaneously; mine Haiphong; hit targets next to the Chinese border and closing all the

railroad routes and the bridges and everything from China, and the roads; go into Cambodia and Laos; go into North Vietnam.

That was a litany of requests that they always presented pretty much as a package, and they'd been doing that ever since early '64, as soon as Johnson came in. And they'd hinted at that as early as '61 and '62, that that's what they would want eventually. But from '64 on, that's what we need right now.

And the President had been holding them down. Part of that package was mobilization. Because they said it would not be done on the cheap. They needed 500,000 troops at a minimum, but up to, perhaps 700,000 or 1,000,000. The President was confronted with those figures right along, from '64, '65 on.

McNamara had done the job for the President, of taming these lions, in effect, keeping them unhappy and frustrated, but still with hopes that as months went by the President would come along to their side. Hopes that a situation in Vietnam would get to the point where the President would realize that he would either lose or do it their way.

So they waited, somewhat patiently, until '67 when they made their big request and the President rejected that. He came out of the meeting saying, "I am fulfilling all of Westmoreland's request, and I am sending 45,000 more troops to Vietnam." Westmoreland had requested 207,000 troops, not 45,000. But Westmoreland was a good soldier, not MacArthur, and he stood by the President and let the President say that with no hint that the President was lying about his request. That was in '67. A year goes by and now the--

Q: So the President had already told the JCS that he was going to send hundreds of thousands of troops?

A: When are you asking me about?

Q: '67.

A: In '67 we already had something like 400,000 troops at that point. We're talking '67 now. The President at that - it might have been 350,000. No, it was more like, it might have been - I don't know exactly. Four hundred thousand, maybe something like that in May of '67. I do remember that he sent only another 45,000 or so at that time, but he did send more later in '67. So by early '68 we were up to 500,000. The point was that Westmoreland had requested those 200,000, going to 700,000, back in '67.

Okay, he was now making exactly the same request as Wheeler presented it. Actually, Westmoreland remained bitter about this to the end of his life. He's still alive, but he's always remained bitter. He was misrepresented by Wheeler, as he said to many interviewers, and implies in his memoirs. I didn't know that at the time. In this Top Secret document, he had made plain to Wheeler, he says, that he wanted those troops only if the President accepted his and the Joint Chiefs' expanded strategy of expanding the war. Then he needed more troops.

But if the restraints were to stay on, as they did under Johnson, and as Johnson had at that point was not willing to expand the war. If they stayed on, he didn't need more troops. Maybe a few more thousand. Maybe 40,000. But he didn't need 100,000 or 200,000 troops.

Wheeler didn't present that. Wheeler chose bureaucratically to present this as a direct unconditional request by Wheeler. And of course it seemed to contrast very sharply with what Westmoreland was quoted as saying in Saigon, and what Rostow was saying. Tet was a victory. The other side lost 100,000 or more troops. They had held no ground, although they held way for a dismayingly long time, about six weeks. But elsewhere they were thrust

back. They had gambled and lost, there was no general uprising. It was a great victory. And here he was requesting 200,000 more troops, 206,000 troops. It seemed like a total contradiction.

I saw that report. It also said that pacification had failed and everything was being pushed back. It was a very, very pessimistic report. So I had met Bobby Kennedy in the fall of '67. I had had a very, for me, important interview with him, which I talk about in my book. And since then I'd seen him a number of times. I thought of him as, of course, the President's brother, and a former Attorney General, now U.S. Senator, someone I knew in the Kennedy administration who had had all the clearances pretty much. He'd been in charge of covert operations in Cuba, for example. I'm not sure I knew that at that particular time, but I knew in general that he had all the clearances. So I didn't think of him as a senator. I knew also he might run as President. But I thought of him as an Executive Branch person. Put him in a separate category.

Whether I would have gone to any other senator at that point, I don't know. I doubt it. But, having met Bobby Kennedy, he's now Senator from New York, I thought he should see the Wheeler Report.

Q: I take it he already had misgivings about the war at this time?

A: I?

Q: No, he.

A: Oh, very much so. No, that was what came through to me so clearly. When I met him in the fall, in October, I think it was. More than any other person that I met in Vietnam, even more than McNamara, more than Bundy, Bill Bundy, certainly more than Walt Rostow. But

more than Harriman, for example, Ambassador Harriman. All of them were pessimistic on the war.

But Bobby conveyed to me not only that he was pessimistic, but that he was anguished about it. It drove him crazy. He showed emotion about it, how terrible what was happening over there, when I talked to him. And I really had the feeling this was the first person I'd met who reacts appropriately, it seemed to me, concerned about the war. Now he was under - everyone knew he was under pressure to run for President, but it had also been reported that he rejected that very much, because there was no chance of his getting the nomination against Johnson, and it would kill his chances for getting it in '72, where he'd be the front runner for the thing. So he had, for political reasons, pushed off appeals for him to run and, instead, Gene McCarthy then came into the race, raising the issue very admirably and working for it without much chance of actually getting the nomination.

Tet changed that equation for Bobby. And by the time I went to see him with the Wheeler report, which I copied and gave to him, I saw Frank Mankiewicz, press secretary, but who was a very close aid. I showed Mankiewicz what I had and Mankiewicz said "yes, you'd better give this to the senator right now." So we drove out to McLean and I handed it to Bobby.

Q: Where did you copy this thing? Where did the document come from?

A: In this case, I'll actually say, it was Alain Enthoven, he was an Assistant Secretary of Defense. I happened to see it in his office. A copy had just come in. He showed it to me which, then, was kind of normal, the way I operated in there. And he'd been a Rand colleague before, years, years before. And it wasn't where I saw most of my documents, in his office, but I happened to see that there, and I - there were Xerox machines around, and I Xeroxed it. Again, you're always Xeroxing your own stuff a lot, and it wasn't too long. I didn't copy the whole thing, but it was about 40 pages long and I copied about 30 pages.

So I gave it to Bobby.

Q: Why only 30?

A: The rest seemed kind of junk, it was a very detailed calculations of logistics and things that I didn't feel was crucial. But I had all the beginning parts and the conclusion. Enough to give the flavor - more than the flavor, to give the substance of what the recommendations were. So I did give it to Bobby. And there were further on negotiations with this. It meant, of course, right away, it was the most pessimistic thing that had ~~every~~ been seen, signed by a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It made very clear that the course we were on was - had no promise at all, that we were on a losing course.

Now, there is an irony to that, in retrospect. Wheeler may have believed that, but Westmoreland did not. Westmoreland, it was clear, was at a moment of real optimism, as he described. He thought, we have killed so many of them, if I can only get these extra men, we really can go. And take advantage of their defeat here. So he wasn't feeling really pessimistic, whether he should have or not.

The fight over mobilization had been the key issue since 1964-65. And the mobilization of reserves meant to the Joint Chiefs and to the President, not just a number of men, but a mission. If you went over 500,000 men to the point where you had to mobilize the reserves with Act of Congress, that meant you were admitting you were in a big war with no ceiling on it. And that meant the American public would demand full use of air power, which was exactly what the Joint Chiefs wanted. If we're sending that many men, and we're going to take that many extra casualties - and remember, the Joint Chiefs didn't want to wait until 500,000, they wanted this at the 100,000 level or the 50,000 level.

But they were now making an all-out pitch to get it, now that he had pushed us up to 500,000. He couldn't expand the war without going over the 500,000, without mobilizing. So he said okay, this is our chance now to do something which will create the political pressure on him in Congress to give us what we want. And that's an all-out attack on North Vietnam, with a risk of war with China.

Let me say parenthetically, by the way--

Q: Risk of nuclear war?

A: Nuclear war. The civilians never disagreed. McNamara and Rusk never disagreed with the Joint Chiefs when the Chiefs said, "If we fight Chinese again, it has to be with nuclear weapons. We are not going to fight Chinese troops, as in Korea, without nuclear weapons." And Rusk not only said that on his own, very often, but McNamara often elicited that response. And he never criticized it. Nobody ever said, "You might not get them even for war with China."

So the Joint Chiefs were allowed to plan on the assumption there would be nuclear war if Chinese came in. At the same time, they were always proposing, from '61 on, in Laos, very aggressive reactions to a situation, as in Laos, before Vietnam, which they had to admit had created a significant likelihood - some said, near certainty. ^{of Chinese entry.} And they tended to say, "No, it's not certain." But they could not say that it was not likely that the Chinese would come in, and then what? Then nuclear weapons.

They'd been pressing there for something then that they described as having a high risk of nuclear war; and, of course, the Chinese tested their first weapon in '64. They didn't have it in '61. But as years went by they had some nuclear weapons, and that was an additional reason for attacking China. As McNamara himself said, in '64, "If we enlarge the war, our

first target to China, our first target will be the nuclear facilities in China.” He said that to the Joint Chiefs. And they were always saying, “Let’s get them now, you know, before it’s too late.”

I, increasingly, have come to believe that there were a number of the Joint Chiefs, certainly LeMay, but not only LeMay, who saw war with China, nuclear war, sooner rather than later as absolutely desirable to do, rather than to wait or not do it. In other words, very few people were pressing, really, to take risks of war with the Soviet Union or actually to pre-empt. LeMay was an exception. He was for that, and he stayed in till early ’65.

I increasingly have come to realize that a lot of Chiefs had a very different attitude toward China, especially when they didn’t have nuclear weapons. The risk, even when they had a few nuclear weapons, the risk of hitting China with nuclear weapons was very, very much less than the risk of hitting the Soviet Union, after ‘64. And the idea of rollback, which was in the Republican platform in 1952, I now see had really never been given up by a number of people.

I even have the hypothesis, quite strongly, that what a number of the Joint Chiefs and military people, and some people in Congress, saw war with Laos - why should we be at war with Laos, it seemed an insane proposal, or in Vietnam, which was ^{marginally} less insane? But the reason they were willing to do what they proposed in Vietnam was in order to provoke war with China, where we could launch nuclear weapons on China. There’s no question they were openly willing to take risks of that. I think it went beyond that. I think they saw an opportunity. They saw the Vietnam War as interesting, or an opportunity, basically, a provocation, that could allow us to work up to nuclear strikes against China. But that’s hypothesis.

What is not a hypothesis now is that they were proposing measures which they admitted, the Joint Chiefs, and the CIA and INR all confirmed, had a real risk of war with China. They were confronting two men, McNamara and Johnson - Johnson the President and McNamara who agreed with him, who were very, very unanxious to do that.

So they had been going-- they had been giving, I think, all these years, and the second constraint was, give the Joint Chiefs enough beyond the minimum required to avoid defeat. Give the Joint Chiefs enough to keep them hoping they'll get still more, and still more, and eventually they may get what they want, though the President and McNamara are ^{thinking} saying "Never. Never. We're never going to give you that. We're never going to give you war with China, or what is close to it." But they never said that to the Joint Chiefs. ^{by 1965,} Not now. ²⁵ Not the next step. ¹¹ But they were giving more and more. They were moving in that direction, keeping the Joint Chiefs hoping that the day would come when the war could be won their way.

Now we'd arrived at sort of the moment of truth. Either you mobilized or you went down. You couldn't justify keeping 500,000 troops there, just to keep the Joint Chiefs happy, which is what they were doing. Keep them quiet, rather, not happy. Unhappy. Very unhappy. But still hopeful. ^{if,} at that last moment you told them, "No, you can't," That would tell the Joint Chiefs, "It's over. We're not going to get, we're never going to get it." And Johnson didn't want ^{to do that} it because he didn't want to evoke ^{from the} exactly what General LeMay, now retired, in '65, did do in '68. He joined the Governor Wallace campaign as his Vice Presidential candidate. And he did. However, he was not very effective. He spoke so openly about his desire to use nuclear weapons, or his happy thoughts about nuclear weapons that he ruined the Wallace campaign.

^{of LeMay appearing in public,} So that fear that Johnson had had, if anything, hurt Wallace, certainly. And may have helped. ^{BJ} Well, I won't speculate more about that. But that's the kind of thing he'd feared all along that the Joint Chiefs would openly join the Republicans.

LeMay had been feeding Goldwater Top Secret documents throughout the campaign of 1964 when he was Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Then handing them to General Goldwater. This I learned from Karl Hess, Goldwater's speechwriter. He would drive the car with Goldwater, General Goldwater, not in uniform, to a supermarket mall in a parking lot. And General LeMay, in uniform, with a raincoat on, would come out of his car with a briefcase full of Top Secret documents showing how we were losing the war - it wasn't the war, so much. Showing how we were losing the arms race and the Russians were gaining superiority on us. Stuff like that. Well, that's one thing. But to join openly the opposition and lobby for an expanded war, Johnson was very afraid of that.

So here's what happened. This is a long background to your question. We come now to the point where I've read the Wheeler report, I've given it to Bobby. The thought of giving it to anybody else, even another Senator, would not have occurred to me.

Q: So Bobby was in mind when you were Xeroxing?

A: Yes. It was for Bobby. I knew he was the leading antiwar spokesperson in Congress, the most powerful one, already, more than McGovern, who I had never met. Mansfield was, at this point, not as open about it as he should have been. There actually were a number of people who felt very strongly against the war, but they mostly kept their mouths shut. And Bobby is the most outspoken at this point, criticizing the war. So I gave it to him as somebody who knew the clearances. You know, it was an Executive Branch mentality, he would have great discretion. But he ought to know this.

I don't remember having any motive in mind to encourage him to run. I didn't think in those terms, but just that, as an antiwar spokesperson in the Senate, he ought to know what the President was seeing. So that already went beyond, of course, anything I'd ever done before

about showing this to an unauthorized person. I did that all the time within the Executive Branch, like everybody else. But only within the Executive Branch. And I thought of Bobby in effect of being an honorary member of the Executive Branch.

Q: Seriously, you didn't hope to get anything out of this at all?

A: Personally?

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, no. In fact, I'll tell you this. And I felt this strongly, actually. I thought that by doing this - it soon transpired, of course, that Bobby was under pressure to run, was reconsidering his calculations, in the light of Tet. More than in the light of the McCarthy campaign. But the McCarthy campaign polls also were encouraging to him, that there was a chance of beating this guy after Tet. So he clearly was giving it now a serious consideration. And I did get into those discussions on one matter, having to do with Vietnam. Well, as I say, I don't recall any particular interest. I thought the political calculations for his getting in or waiting till '72 was so beyond my knowledge or expertise, or what his chances were, or what it would mean and so forth, that I just didn't think about domestic politics. I never had.

But, I thought that Bobby could become President. And I actually believed that if he became President, I didn't see how he could put me in a position of trust because I'd given him these documents. I didn't see how he could, ^{on the inside,} ~~in the outside,~~ how he would let me near documents that I might choose or decide to give to somebody else. So, actually, I really thought that I could get into some other administration, which didn't know what I had done. But I didn't think I had a place in Bobby's administration.

Now, in retrospect, now that 30 years have passed, and I've seen a lot more examples, that was in a way naïve. No, they do take people who have given them information. Henry Kissinger was doing that that year, in 1968. He was giving information to the Nixon campaign, as well as advising the Humphrey campaign and advising Johnson. And it didn't preclude his getting in to the Nixon ^{administration} campaign. Granted, they didn't fully trust him. They always felt that he was leaking stuff to serve himself, to Reston and Max Frankel and others. But, you know, he was the National Security Assistant.

So, in retrospect, I suppose it wouldn't have ruined me. But at the time I remember feeling very clearly. See, it was so unprecedented for me to do this. I said I am doing something that ends my possibility of working for Bobby Kennedy. I'm breaking the rules here in a way that he would not allow.

So what happened next, though, the next I knew, there's a huge--

Q: Does he ask you questions? Does Robert Kennedy ask you questions?

A: Oh, yeah. No, and I told him, frankly, anything I would have said to ~~defer to~~ the President, or anything. So, yeah, we discussed Vietnam.

Q: Did he ask where the documents had come from?

A: Defense Department. This is a document from Wheeler. Remember, this is a guy who had seen this kind of stuff, every hour of the day for years when he was Attorney General. This was obviously a sensitive document, Top Secret, for the President, and so forth. But that wasn't terribly unusual for him to see.

So, the next thing is, I read in the newspaper, the *Times*, the story where Westmoreland asks for 206,000 more troops. And there's a lot in the story, which is fairly detailed. And which gave me - it took me many years to realize that I had been mistaken. I assumed they had a copy of the Wheeler report. It seemed that they must have had it before them, because they had quite a few details from the Wheeler report.

Very surprisingly, they didn't have a copy of the Wheeler report. They'd gotten an oral account of it from somebody. If I had realized that, in the story I'm about to tell, I would have given them the Wheeler report. And it didn't even come up. I assumed they had it.

But what did occur to me, the next thing was, I thought, "Well, my God, there's a big leak." I'd seen a lot of leaks in my time. But I'd never seen a reaction to a leak the way this one hit. There were some hearings just about to go on, and it came up in the hearings. McCarthy came out of one of the hearings saying, "This is, you know, terrible, terrible, we've got to have an investigation. We've got to have hearings. This is amazing. Here, the President is saying we're winning, and Westmoreland is asking for huge more troops."

And the discussion, by the way, was not in terms of this means widening the war. In fact, for 30 years even most scholarly accounts of this have not really picked up the fact that the issue was not 700,000 troops to do the same job we'd been doing all along. The issue was that you make it an entirely different war, with invasion of North Vietnam. If you look back, at the time, there's almost no discussion of that as a possibility. But that's what I was worried about and it turns out I was more than justified in worrying about that. That's what Westmoreland was pressing for at that time.

However, I thought, I was very surprised. My first reaction at the Congressional reaction - Fulbright said "we must have hearings, we must investigate this. This cannot be done, you know, without coming to Congress. We demand" - there was talk of repealing the Tonkin

Gulf resolution at that moment. They'd just had hearings on the Tonkin Gulf ^{events} ~~hearings~~ in February of '68, four years late. So this is a month later, in the end of February or early March.

So he was now saying, he now had concluded, that they had been lied to in Tonkin Gulf. Fulbright had been lied to. And he was now talking about repealing the Tonkin Gulf resolution, which had authorized the President to go to war. That wouldn't, in itself, have affected Johnson very much, but symbolically it would have been important.

So, there was this huge reaction, and my first thought about that was, ^u why are they getting so excited about this? It's the same request he made last year. ^{//} And then I realized, ^u but they don't know that. ^{''} They never heard one of Westmoreland's real requests. The President has always lied about what the scale of those requests was. Not just last year, but every year. It went back - it's another story, but I'll just give the punch line.

It went back to July 1965, when the President had authorized another 100,000 troops in Vietnam, bringing us to a total of 175,000, with an assurance, an expectation to Westmoreland and the Chiefs that he would send at least another 100,000 on top of that. That would be 275,000. And Westmoreland making it plain that he needed more beyond that. So this was a first step toward 300,000 minimum, more likely 500,000 or more. That was all understood. And I drafted the speech that was to announce that.

Q: You need to drink some water.

A: Thanks. You are absolutely right.

Q: Maybe I do, too. Who knows?

A: What are you drinking there?

Q: Water.

A: Doesn't look like water.

Q: Pellegrino. Fancy water.

A: Sparkling water, for the director, huh? Okay. In July, I actually drafted the speech, which was approved by Rusk and McNamara and McGeorge Bundy announcing that we were sending another 100,000 troops. President didn't give my speech. Or any speech. I drafted it for Secretary of Defense McNamara to give, actually. But instead of having McNamara give this speech--

Q: What was the exact date of the speech?

A: The speech was - his announcement was July 28. I think that my draft is dated the 22nd or something like that. July 22nd. So, instead of having McNamara give my speech, which had been approved, I heard Johnson on a noonday television press conference - impromptu press conference, more or less, very low key. He started the press conference by announcing some appointments. I think it involved sending David Lillienthal as part of a group to investigate development measures in South Vietnam. And it had to do also with Goldberg becoming a justice of the Supreme Court, or who would replace him. Goldberg was going to become U.N. Ambassador. And somebody was to replace him. So he made a number of, what seemed like the main announcements, and then remark in a very offhand way, in effect, "Westmoreland has made his requests. I have met his requests. I am sending our troops will go immediately from 75,000 to 125,000. And more will be sent as requested and needed, or when requested."

And I watched that program, with my boss John McNaughton, in his office, on television. And as he said that, we all gasped. And I said, 50,000? He's sending 50,000 troops, up to 125,000? What's happened? And McNaughton said, "We'll wait and see if he modifies it." No. He didn't. And so I said, "What's happened? Has he changed the decision?" McNaughton said, "You'd better find out."

I went down to the Joint Chiefs, the Joint Directorate, and talked to the personnel man down there, the general, and I said, "Has he changed the number that's going, from 100,000 to 50,000." He said, "No, nope, 100,000 is on the way." So he'd just lied about what was going. He told them 50,000 and was going to present the other 50,000, who arrived on schedule, all in by 1st of November. *as the result of another, later request.*

Q: The President lied?

A: The President lied and about how many he was sending, and sent 100,000, not 50,000. And more after that, as he'd planned. But each later version, he implied was a later decision, arrived at bit by bit, slice by slice, as the thing wore on. And he did that every time. So I realized "Gee, last year, yes, this request was made but this was for the first time now, *that Congress is hearing the full request* Johnson, last year, hadn't granted it. But he said that the 40,000 he was sending were all that Westmoreland had requested. Which was a lie. Westmoreland had definitely requested more at that point."

So, I said, "That's what he's going to do again. He's got this request for 200,000. He'll grant either 200,000 or 100,000, but he'll say 50,000, as he had done before. He won't let Congress know where we're going on this thing." And I thought, "the decision is not yet made."

I realized that he had managed to maneuver us into this war ever since early '64, bit by bit, by relying on the secrecy of everybody in the Executive Branch, civilian and military, who knew what he was doing. They're keeping that secret so that he could lie to the Congress about it, and the public. And not be caught out. That the secrecy system, and the reliability of people like me to keep their promise of secrecy no matter what, from Congress, enabled him to do things that he could not have gotten away with, politically, if he'd had to do it in the open. He could present them, in effect, with a small *fait accompli*. Too late for them to do anything. They would never really know where they were going. Somehow the war got bigger and bigger. Although, actually, the figure of 500,000 or 700,000 had been talked about the Chiefs as early as '65, three years earlier. And the public had never been given a clue on that.

✱ So I thought, "I'm going to try to take away that veil of secrecy, so that he'll know he has to make his decision in the open." The thought occurred to me of a leak a day. I didn't associate myself with that 206,000 leak. Later, it occurred to me that Bobby, after all, could have somehow been the source of that leak. But the people who wrote the story have always assured me they just didn't believe Bobby could have had anything to do with it. I don't know for sure. But certainly they didn't get it directly from Bobby.

At first, though, I didn't associate myself with it at all. I just thought, "Gee, Congress should have had this information all along. I've been wrong to keep that particular promise there. And this shows what a leak can possibly do. It can alert Congress to the reality of the situation and wake them up and get them to do something."

So, I thought, "I've been a fool all this time, for putting my, defining my loyalty in terms of keeping my mouth shut all the time, my loyalty to the country." So, I thought, "Okay, the way to do this, then, is, I will make a Top Secret leak every day. The important thing is not the substance of it. The important thing is for the President to understand that somebody

& I could have decided, then - dump it all out,
all I can remember my PP on '61... Substance
(on part line...)

with high access to information to his decisions has decided to go public with this. That he cannot make this decision reliably in secret. And, if and when he decides to send 100,000 troops, or 200,000 troops, he can't do it secretly. It will be known. Somebody who knows it will tell."

So the stuff that I gave had to be stuff, then, that it was clear it was not coming from some low-level person who might not know of his decision when he made it. So the first thing I gave - I then went to Neil Sheehan, whom I'd known slightly in Vietnam, not very well. But he was now the Pentagon correspondent for the New York Times. So I got in touch with him and gave him, I think the first thing I gave him was the order of battle that had been revised.

Westmoreland had managed to keep militia - the kind of people who had been attacking us, it seems, in Iraq, for example, not organized military. That may or may not be the case in Iraq. But he kept the militia of the Viet Cong, who represented a large part of the bodies that we counted as killed in Tet. He didn't have them in the order of battle at all, meaning the accounting of the enemy forces that we were facing. The effect of that was, he was underestimating the forces we were facing by about 50%, which is not a good basis for planning, but that enabled him to say that we were winning the war. So, the CIA in the wake of Tet, doubled the order of battle, which they'd known all along, but bureaucratically they had given way to the Joint Chiefs and to MAC-V on that estimate of the order of battle.

It's not unlike the tug of war that went on over the WMDs in Iraq, where the CIA had conceded to what the White House wanted, to what Vice President Cheney wanted, and others, which was to say we had good proof of WMDs over there. And they gave much more credence to that than their own analysts believed.

Well, in this case, they doubled the order of battle. So that was one big leak that came out under Neil Sheehan. There were several others. There were a number of others. I gave cables from Westmoreland. And this went on, day after day, for about four days.

Q: Now where did these cables come from?

A: From Westmoreland. It's a longer story.

Q: But, I mean, where did you find the cables to copy them?

A: I had access. The reason I had access to all this stuff was that I was the member from RAND of this group that now, under Clifford, was actually looking for alternative ways to fulfill Westmoreland's request - Alternative ways of mobilizing, going on, and so forth. In theory not to re-examine the whole question, but in theory to just look at ways of filling those requests. So I had access to very high-level stuff, then, more than I usually would have.

And so, from their point of view, I had now become a security risk, because I had come to understand that putting this information out to the Congress could serve my country much better than my keeping it to myself and my keeping it from them. So I was no longer reliable, had they known that, to keep their secrets no matter what they were. I had been for ten years, and now I wasn't. Now there was a chance I would tell Congress or the press.

So, but this had a very specific point. This was to influence a possible future decision by making the President aware that he could not do it secretly. If he wanted to send 100,000 troops, he would have to know that Congress would know that. That might influence his decision. So the upshot, the final one, was that I gave Neil Sheehan handwritten notes of a Top Secret cable from Westmoreland dated - it was actually dated earlier, but it arrived in Washington about January 27, 1968.

Q: Neil Sheehan is a reporter for the *New York Times*?

A: For the *New York Times*. To whom I later gave the Pentagon Papers. But that was three years later. So these were my first leaks to a reporter, ever. And I chose him because he was the reporter for the Pentagon.

Q: Could I ask one question?

A: Yeah.

Q: What is the difference between leaking and stealing?

A: Well, legally, actually, there is no ^{criminal} law against copying information and giving it to somebody else. That's covered by copyright law. But the government can't copyright. And even if it could, it couldn't copyright it's own material. I have an expensive education in this, so I know what, as a defendant, what is not generally known about this.

leaking isn't illegal;
stealing is - but leaking
isn't stealing...

There is a criminal copyright aspect, but it's very narrow. In generally, copyright is a civil process. You can sue for damages if you have been deprived of the intellectual property here. When I copied 7,000 pages of the Pentagon Papers, I wasn't actually charged with stealing. I was charged with converting, a slightly different thing, it comes under the same laws, but that requires a significant deprivation of an owner of documents from the use of his property.

When I copied 7,000 pages, they happened to be, I just took them out overnight to copy them and brought them back to my safe the next morning. I was the only person at RAND authorized to have the documents except for Harry Rowen, the President - only the two of us.

And he didn't use them at all for research. So I was the only person using this. A little hard to argue that I was depriving anyone significantly of the use of their property. Conversion usually has to do with using someone's automobile, an official automobile for a private use. The chauffeur uses your car to go see his parents. That's the main use of it, actually. Or using some other piece of property. I was doing something unauthorized when I copied those documents. I was using the property. Whose property they were was always very much in question, actually. These were government documents that RAND was holding and so forth.

But I assumed, initially, right away, that I could be charged for theft. Most Americans have taken it for granted that I stole those documents and I could be charged for theft. Actually, according to the law, copying them and giving the copies did not come under theft at all. Most people would imagine it did. But it doesn't, if you know the law.

On the conversion, very hard to argue that I had had a significant deprivation, because it was only out overnight, and I was the only person authorized anyway. So as the experts on this kind of law wrote an *amicus curiae* brief to the ACLU, from the ACLU, to my court, saying "Ellsberg has not, by any previous interpretation of the law, broken any law." That brought in the whole question of the Espionage Act, also, under which I was charged. It turned out that the Espionage Act had never been intended to use against a leak, giving information to a domestic newspaper or to the press. The people in Congress had said, "This doesn't apply to newspapermen, does it?" And, you know, they'd been assured by the government: "No, we have no intention of using this against giving information to the public. Only, you know, for spying. Secretly giving it to a foreign power, for the interests of a foreign power.

That's why the Espionage Act had never been used against any leaker before. I was the first. It was a test case, essentially, likely to lose in front of that Supreme Court. In other words, we didn't have, and we still don't have, an Official Secrets Act, of the kind that does exist in most

countries of the world, including Britain. Britain's a democracy, relatively speaking, but does not have a First Amendment. They didn't have the Revolution. They don't have the First Amendment ^{or} freedom of the press and freedom of speech. And they do have an Official Secrets Act. We don't.

So the prosecution of me, which was the first against a leaker, ever, and there's only been one since, ten years later, and that was 20 years ago. Two. But the one against me, then, was trying to use the Espionage Act as if it were an Official Secrets Act. And if that failed, trying to use the theft statute as an Official Secrets Act, which was likely to fail. When my lawyer told me all this, a year into my legal proceedings, it had taken him a whole year of research to discover that there didn't seem to be any law that corresponded to what I had done.

Q: But here's another question. Didn't you, aside from the legality of what you did, didn't you, at the time that you were leaking these documents, intend to steal them? Didn't you feel as though you were taking something?

(I wasn't taking them permanently; I was copying them (in the Pentagon!) and giving out copies - leaking.)

A: Actually, no, really not. I thought I was breaking the - I thought I was breaking a statute. I assumed I was. In fact, I wasn't. But I assumed there was a statute I was breaking. Theft would not have been what occurred to me. It does occur to a lot of people for some reason. Yet they're wrong. It didn't happen to be on my mind. But what if it had been? So what?

Q: I would agree with "so what."

A: I mean, I assumed that I was breaking a more serious statute than theft. I assumed there was an Official Secrets Act that I was breaking that I could be put in prison for. I was sharing information. Many people think of that as theft. They're wrong, legally. I didn't know the law, but I'm just saying I didn't particularly think of that law as being the operative one. Why are you making that point?

Q: The reason I'm making the point is that I think it's important that people understand that you were taking a risk.

A: No, I thought I was violating the law. Going to prison. And, in the end, I was prosecuted for the Pentagon Papers. I was the first, but still the risk was there and the risk was real. It wasn't exactly what I thought. But I was facing 115 years in prison, eventually. I didn't think I'd get that for these particular documents, because I knew that leaks on this scale were daily occurrences. Not from the same person, usually.

But the *Times* is always saying, "We have a document. The *Times* has obtained a copy of this document," and so forth. It was obviously that leaking went on all the time. I was not aware of a prosecution having taken place, so I knew that they didn't all lead to prosecutions. Perhaps they couldn't find the person who did it. But, this is in '68 now. I knew, though, that there was a good chance they would find me.

Q: We just have to stop for a second. Just for makeup. Sorry.

Q: You know I asked you this question about what's inside your head because I think that's crucial to this whole story. Here's the question. And it's not like I have some kind of answer in mind. It is a real question rather than, say, a rhetorical one. Are you thinking that "I'm doing something bad here. I'm doing something even perhaps immoral, but what I'm doing, the immorality of what I'm doing is justified by some higher morality, or some higher ethical principal.

A: How could I possibly think that it was immoral to tell Congress that General Westmoreland had said - I didn't finish telling you what the cable said - that General William Westmoreland, our general in Vietnam, had told the President on January 27th, in

Washington” “We have destroyed the enemy bases in South Vietnam, we have chased the enemy to the borders, where we are pursuing him. He has no ability for offensive operations within South Vietnam.” That was three days before they simultaneously overran virtually every district town in South Vietnam. So the disconnect between what he was telling the President in a top secret cable - which is pretty much what he’d told the press back in November. His disconnect from the realities of Vietnam were made unmistakable by that document. How could I have possibly thought that was immoral to share with the Congress?

X Q: Because you knew that it was leaking a document that you knew you shouldn’t leak. *was directed not to leak, that I had promised not to*

A: It made me realize that I’d made a promise, under oath, that I had made foolishly, *had - but which I (or someone) should* unwisely, without any real awareness of what I would be asked to conceal. And that I’d kept *look!* that promise far longer than was good for the country. And the time had come now to realize *the* that that promise had to be superseded by a loyalty to the Constitution, which had been *direction* flouted every month of the war. In particular, from ’64 on - the intent that Congress should *& promise* declare war. *was wrong to say in these circumstances!*

It came to me when I saw the reaction of Congress to this, that they did have a role to play, which I hadn’t really realized at all as a member of the executive branch. I was as cynical about Congress as any other member of the executive branch. And suddenly I thought, the President is now in a position where, against his will, he’s going to find himself forced by the Joint Chiefs and by his own ability to keep secrets, to do it their way. And that will be disastrous. That will get us into war with China.

This was in other words for me a crisis. A possibility of getting into war with China had been implicit there ever since the Laos discussions in ’61. Or in ’64-’65. Eventually along this road we may at war with China, sooner if we do it the JCS way. Now we’d reach a point where the JCS way lay days or weeks ahead. What to do in this situation? I felt that to do it

the JCS way, which could only be done secretly. There would be too much opposition to it if it were public. But if the President has the ability to do this secretly, he will not be able to tell the Joint Chiefs: "I can't do this, I couldn't get it through Congress."

Implicitly he would know that they knew, "Oh, you can get it through Congress. Just don't tell them. You don't have to tell them." And I realized that I'd been part of a secrecy process that had facilitated that escalation year after year. I'd been part of it. I told myself I was a critic. I told myself that I had - when people asked me my opinion, had told them truthfully inside the executive branch what my opinion was. I'd spoken truth to power - Month after month, day after day. It had had no effect on the war, the war had proceeded. Mainly my silence was what I mainly gave the administration. I didn't speak truth to others who could have power only if they knew the truth, only if they had the information. Otherwise they were powerless.

(Like King's note on Res.)

People who were supposed to have some power over foreign policy: the Congress and ultimately the public, were powerless as long as I, and a thousand other people, kept our mouths shut. So I didn't have any great moral conflict over doing that. The big thing was I realized: I ^{didn't} realize this could be effective. I ^{didn't} realize that this was a way of serving my country. As soon as I realized that I thought, "Woop, I've been wrong before. I'd be wrong if I didn't share this." That's the way I felt ever since that. That was '68.

Interestingly, that is a year and a half before I copied the Pentagon papers and gave them to Congress. A long interval in between there. And in between I was very influenced by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, and Barbara Deming. Joan Bondurant. Other people who wrote on Gandhi and philosophy. And by Thoreau. I had all those influences. And I had the example, very important to me, of Randy Keeler and others who were going to prison in a Gandhian fashion to speak the truth by their own actions, and by their lives. Non-violently.

And I used to say all the time, well those are what changed me, made me do what I did. Then I had to remember, well you know I'd already taken steps that I thought could put me in prison, and would at least lose me my job and my clearance, before I read any of those influences. Before I met those people. What was the difference? And if we were to look at that - because I do have a feeling that the Ghandhian influence was very strong on me. And this was kind of a paradox. Because a month before I met any of those people I had already given Top Secret documents to the *New York Times*. And the answer I came up with was this - as best I can understand myself and the difference between those two periods: In March of '68, I didn't very much expect to go to jail because as far as I knew these leaks were not routine, but they had many precedents. They happened all the time, high level leaks. Usually by some service chief, by LeMay or somebody like that, would give out a Top Secret document. Nobody had gone to jail as far as I knew. But I figured there was a high chance of my being found out, and actually I was, it so happened.

And apparently when they find people out they don't necessarily put them in prison. But I did think I would lose my clearance. That meant not just not working for Bobby Kennedy, that meant not working for anybody in the way that I'd done for the last ten years. Lose my job, leave that part of the country, which I liked, you know Southern California. Find a different kind of profession. Which was all right - an academic profession of some sort. But what I was committed to was the work I'd been doing in Vietnam and in the Pentagon. I did risk all that.

And it was at a crisis when the alternative seemed to be immediately a disastrous escalation. Now the Pentagon Papers were 7,000 pages of Top Secret documents. So I took for granted on that, one, that I not only would be found out, but if they prosecuted, which was probable, I'd go to prison for the rest of my life. I didn't see that as a five-year sentence or a ten-year sentence. I thought 30, 40 years. And I would've gotten 35 years, with good behavior. If I had good behavior. I was facing 115 years. That's what I expected when I copied the

Pentagon Papers. But that's 7,000 pages; that's not a 30-page document. They've got to go after me on that one.

So it would seem that I was, you know, I was willing to do that by the fall of '69. But there's another difference. In the fall of '69 I didn't foresee quick escalation. Ironically, I was wrong. What the President was considering in the fall of '69 secretly, and nobody broke secrecy on this, was the full escalation the Joint Chiefs had asked for, including nuclear weapons. That was President Nixon. But I didn't know that. I thought, that lies down the road. So I was ready to go to prison forever in '69 to have some chance of averting a probable later escalation - a continuation of the war.

I don't think I was ready to do that in March of '68. If I'd just thought, "the war is going to go on as before," I don't think I would've given up everything for that. On the other hand, given what I did fear, would I have put out the Pentagon Papers at that point and accepted the certainty of jail? Yes. I've asked myself this. And the answer is yes. So why didn't I put out the Pentagon Papers? Some of them were in my hands right then. Answer: they were history. I had better stuff; I had current documents. I was putting out Top Secret stuff that had just arrived in Washington days before that was much more significant. I didn't bother with the history, even of the Tonkin Gulf.

This is getting a little complicated I know. But to run the changes on this: if I'd had current documents in 1969, as I had in '68, or '64 - if I'd had current documents in '69 I would never have bothered copying 7,000 pages of history. I just wouldn't have taken the task. It didn't look promising enough, to put history out. I would've put out the current documents. And the reason I push this so much is what I'm asking people to do, now, is to do - Hmm, I could put it this way, I've never really thought of it - I didn't want to seem self-serving when I talk to people in the government to the extent I do, via media. But I didn't want to be

saying just, "Do what I did." That sounds as though I'm congratulating myself for having done it. And it just sounds too self-referential.

So for some years I've been saying, "Do what I wish I'd done. What I should've done in '64 and didn't do. Don't do what I did. don't wait till the bombs are falling. Don't put out history. It might help, it's not worthless, but put out current documents that show where we're going, what's wrong with it. What the obstacles and the dangers that it poses are. Put those out when they can do some good in time."

And in fact it just occurred to me as I say this to you for the first time, in effect I'm saying [^]~~do~~ what I did do in '68.[^] Actually, that turned out to be quite effective. More than the Pentagon Papers turned out to be later. In his memoirs Johnson says, or in some books that have come out, Johnson says to the wise men and to people he's advising in late March, he says, "I would've given Westmoreland what he wanted but there were all those leaks." He's certainly referring to the 206,000 leak in particular, but there was a whole slew of leaks, of course, by me. And there was a piece in the *Wall Street Journal* that said, "A hundred FBI agents have been assigned to the task of finding who is doing these leaks, plural." All of these things. So I did figure that they were on my tail. In fact it turned out that they had identified me as the source. Probably.

Q: It also seems that they were in earnest.

A: What?

Q: It also seems that they were in earnest.

A: Were in?

Q: Were in earnest.

A: Because of the FBI agents?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, yeah. And then the question comes to the efficiency. But in this case a guy named Donald Stewart, who was the chief investigator in the Pentagon, he wrote memoirs, I've seen drafts of some it. Stuff he gave to Jack Anderson, a lot of it. And Anderson reported that Donald Stewart told him he had in fact named me as the probable source of these leaks in a memo to J. Edgar Hoover and to Clark Clifford, Defense Secretary. And according to Don Stewart, the reason I wasn't arrested was a bureaucratic foul-up. He had recommended prosecution of Neil Sheehan, and Hedrick Smith, who did the leaks that I'd been giving. And Daniel Ellsberg.

And Clark Clifford had come back and he said, "I'm establishing good relations with the press here." And he had meant to veto the prosecution of Neil Sheehan and Hedrick Smith. And according to Stewart, someone in CIA misinterpreted that as covering me as well. And they just dropped the case against me. So had that happened then there wouldn't have been the Pentagon Papers out, I would've been caught for these. Which by the way, I was prepared to experience.

Q: You said that if you had had at the time that you leaked the Pentagon Papers, if you had had current documents. What happened in that year that you no longer had access to current documents?

A: Oh, I did have access. What I didn't have were documents that would prove what Mort Halperin had been telling me. That the President was making threats of escalation just like his

predecessors, that he would carry them out, that the war was almost sure to get larger. Because the threats would fail. He didn't see that in writing. In fact he knew that by having been shown things that he wasn't supposed to see. And he was a deputy to Henry Kissinger. Another deputy - it's what I've been telling you. Another deputy handed Mort Halperin threats that were written for Kissinger to give to ^{Dobrynin} Doug Brennan in May of '69.

And as Mort has told me the story, when Larry Eagleburger, later Secretary of State – when Larry Eagleburger, who is another aide now to Kissinger at the time, handed him several cables to read and some talking papers. One of them he quickly recognized had not been shown to him, and that meant he was not supposed to see it. It was on Vietnam, it was the kind of thing he should normally have been seen, shown. So, by the same instinct that I would've had, ^{meant} says, "Obviously I wasn't meant to see that." So he handed it to Eagleburger and said, "I don't think you meant to give this to me."

And Eagleburger said, "Are you going to read it or not?" So he read it. He now knew a policy that even he as deputy to Kissinger was not supposed to know. And that was that explicit threats were being given to ^{Dobrynin} Doug Brennan, which he read as implying nuclear threats; total devastation of your country; a great scale of increase; the destruction of your country. He understood that to mean a nuclear threat. And it turns out he was right.

Q: Threats to Russia, threats to the Soviet Union?

A: No, no, I'm sorry, North Vietnam. He was giving these threats to Doug Brennan for him to pass on to North Vietnam. We weren't in direct contact with North Vietnam at that point. So he was threatening, already in May, using nuclear weapons. And those threats got very explicit later. But that he read correctly as an implicit threat already. So I was hearing this. So, as I say, Mort himself was not able to give me a piece of paper, had he wanted to, That proved what he was saying. He'd seen that when he wasn't supposed to see it. He'd heard

other things. He'd been told other things. We didn't have it in writing. And in fact most of this stuff has still not come out in writing. The Pentagon Papers of the Nixon Era have not been released. And that's 30 years ago. We don't have anything remotely comparable to what we got in the Pentagon Papers yet on Nixon. And yet there's enough there to demonstrate what the pattern was, and Mort was right about it.

Q: They were escalating?

A: They were escalating, they were threatening to escalate in the foolish hope that the threat alone would suffice to get them what they wanted - would get Northern Vietnamese troops out of what they saw as the southern part of their country, South Vietnam. They would remove them under threat of escalation.

Q: Under threat of nuclear war.

A: Under threat of nuclear war, definitely. And in fact, if we leap ahead - in 1972, the Christmas bombing, during the Christmas bombing. A friend of mine actually, named ^{Egbal} Akbal Ahmad, a Pakistani social scientist who was a professor at Hampshire College--

Q: Yeah, we try to get you to drink water.

A: ^{Egbal} Akbal Ahmad, who's dead now, told me this in '74. [In fact, "We're bringing nuclear weapons into Vietnam here a bit more." I feared in '69 that they were on a course that would eventually, could eventually lead to nuclear weapons. And even short of that, would prolong the war, would renew the bombing, bigger scale bombing, various things - mining Haiphong, hitting the ^{dykes} dykes. That that would eventually happen. Reading Gandhi and reading Thoreau had made a difference in me to the point where I was now ready to go to

prison forever just to avert that long run possibility. I don't think I would've done that two years ago. I had to be faced with a crisis, an immediate escalation I was trying to avert.

Q: Are there--

A: So I had changed to that extent.

Q: Are there passages in Gandhi and Thoreau specifically?

A: Yes. ^{To} The name Thoreau, particularly, for example. Well let me mention Martin Luther King, who had a very large influence on me. In his *Stride Toward Freedom*, he talks about the influence that Gandhi had on him, which he studied as a divinity student. But it kind of had a theoretical idealistic flavor to him. And he'd actually been persuaded by Reinhold Niebuhr, as apparently Robert McNamara was, that there are times when you have to do evil to bring about good.

And there's a time for violence, a time for war, so forth. As in *Ecclesiastes*. Until he was confronted with a situation in Montgomery, Alabama of the bus boycott, which he was named to be head of because of Rosa Park's arrest. When Rosa Parks refused to go to the back of the bus, and was taken off the bus in handcuffs, he as a young pastor who'd just arrived in Montgomery, was confronted with the challenge of what to do about it.

And they were proposing a boycott. This I read in '68, actually. Having been introduced to it by a young Indian woman who advised me to read *Stride Toward Freedom*. Just after I'd copied, put out these documents, actually it was the next month in '68. So I was reading then they proposed a bus boycott, and at first he was very uneasy about doing that, it's sort of like you're asking me, did I feel like stealing, and doing that. He said a boycott was the tool of the white citizen's councils. They used it against white businesses that traded with blacks.

✓ They would boycott them. And that was standard tool of the racists in Alabama. How could he pick up something like that? And he agonized about it overnight. He said, then he remembered Gandhi's words: "He who participates in evil" - rather, "He who keeps silent about evil doing, is participating in it as if he were doing the evil deed himself."

And it said it came to him that what we were doing, what they would be doing in the boycott, is withdrawing their cooperation from an evil system, a system of segregation. They were no longer silently accepting that this was legitimate and refusing to protest. That was a quote from Gandhi that came to me through King before I'd ever read any Gandhi. And he also quoted Thoreau. And Thoreau was very powerful on this, and there's a lot I could quote that's relevant to the current situation, because he was protesting a war that he saw as an aggressive occupation of a foreign country by troops of our own country. And that was the U.S. occupation of Mexico, which followed deliberate, manipulated provocations by President Polk, of attacks on our troops. Which gave him the excuse to move, without Congress, into an invasion of Mexico. Abraham Lincoln had protested that very strongly at the time as being a usurpation, violation of the Constitution, aggression. Just like our invasion of Iraq.

I've quoted Thoreau on the Mexican War very widely. And also U.S. Grant, the later President, or later Union General, who participated in that as a Lieutenant in the Mexican War. And who said it was one of the worst acts ever done by a stronger nation against a weaker. We were imitating the authoritarian - the monarchies of Europe, in their aggrandizement in doing that. So it was a war of aggression. News to me.

"What do you do when your country is doing this?" Thoreau said. And he said, "The place for an honest man, when your country is doing such things, is in prison. It's there that the fugitive slave should find you, or the Indian pleading for the rights of his race." Or, something else should find him. And then he said, pretty much in the same passage, he said, "Voting for something is a kind of gaming, it doesn't really affect things by itself." He

says, "People who oppose something may cast a cheap vote against it, but it means that they don't really care too much whether their way is followed or not. They rely on the majority." He says, "Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence." And the next sentence is, "A minority is powerless when it conforms to the majority. It is not even a minority then. But it irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight."

And, just as King was confronted by Rosa Parks' action, and he realized that she was living out the Gandhian precepts - that you don't have to cooperate with wrongdoing. And it got him to overcome his scruples, his inhibitions about the bus boycott. I saw that these people who were going to prison in the Fall of '69 that I met were doing what Thoreau said: they were casting their whole vote. They were 22-year-old men, all they had was their lives, and they put those on the balance, on-violently. And went to jail to say "This is wrong, I won't be part of it." They didn't go to Canada or Sweden. They didn't go into the National Guard. They didn't go to Vietnam. They went to prison.

I was talking to one just the other day ^{Prison} he said, "The prison experience" - In La Tuna and some other places - "was the richest experience of his life." He didn't regret ^J at all. He said he'd never met a draft resister who went to prison who regretted what he had done. Even though many of them paid a big price. His own marriage, his own first marriage collapsed as a result of that, which was typical. But they were casting their whole vote. And so the question in my mind was, that he put in my mind, after I'd done this reading, was, "All right, what can I do to help stop this war now? If I'm ready to go to prison - now that I'm ready to go to prison."

I realized that he was very much like me; his life had been like mine. If he could go to prison, I could go to prison. It was open to me, I didn't spend any time saying am I willing or not, I knew I was willing. I'd risked my life, my body, many times on the roads in Vietnam. When I thought our cause was just, when I was trying to support it. And even when

I didn't. Even when I didn't have a very good reason I'd risked my life a lot there. So, I could go to prison. Just like these other people. And the key thing there was, I realized looking back on it, was not a readiness to go to prison. Because most people don't face that prospect in terms of what they might do. But they all face the loss of a job, or influence, or career, or prestige, or relationships with friends, friendships, organizations and so forth.

It's hard to be effective, to be effective enough, to do everything you can, you can't cast your whole vote if you're tied down by - if you accept a taboo against risking your career, risking your clearance, risking the good opinion of your friends. If those are absolute restraints, there isn't much you can do. And when people feel powerless, they're not wrong, within that box. But if people could understand that a human is capable of risking all those things, just as we know that young 19-year-olds and 20-year-olds are capable of risking their bodies and their lives when their President tells them to do it, they can do that later in life as civilians. And their sisters and mothers can do it. It's possible, it's within our capability. It's not easy. It raises the question, for instance, of what McNamara could've done. Or people like him during that period.

People in that position almost always say - let's say General Powell right now. Let me assume that his attitudes towards this war were very similar to those of McNamara's at various points in the Vietnam War - was unnecessary, hopeless, non-winnable, very costly in terms of our diplomacy and our own self-image and the costs at home. A lot has leaked out that suggests that Powell feels that, but he didn't leave. And he made statements - just like McNamara - that he could not have believed. And I know that McNamara did not believe. He lied, in other words, a lot, in pursuit of this policy.

Now why did he do that, and what else could he have done? Let me make a guess about both of them. My guess is that Powell, I'm assuming this attitude on his part - many people have claimed. My guess is that Powell would've answered his wife, if his wife said, "Why are you

still there?" the way I guess McNamara would've answered, did answer his wife, I suspect: "If I left, I would leave the President to the unchallenged voices of people who want to blow North Vietnam to pieces, or Iraq to pieces. Who will get us into war with China." I'm talking about McNamara now. "If I leave, the President will face the Joint Chiefs on his own. He'll bring in someone else, but that someone else will not have the ability I've built up in the last three years to outmaneuver the Joint Chiefs, to master them, to use authority and to intimidate them in various ways. I can keep those lions at bay. Keep them satisfied." He wouldn't have said all this to his wife, but in his mind: "I know how to give them just enough to keep them from going public with their opposition, but not so much as to blow up a war with China."

"Without me there then, there will be war with China." And I think, by the way, that's not only what I imagine he did say to himself, I think that's quite realistic. He would've been risking that if he had, say, suddenly just died. Or if he'd gone and been silent. What he did say when people ask him, has said, is, "If I'd left, it would've been a one-day story." Well, that's silly in its way. If McNamara had left, just the mere leaving would've been much more than a one day story. But I don't assume that it would've been critical, that it would've changed the policy that much. Nor if Powell had just left. That would be much more than a one-day story. But, would it have kept us out of war with Iraq? I don't think so. And that's all he can imagine doing. People have resigned, not with much effect.

When they do it a gentlemanly way, which is, you don't embarrass the President any more than you have to. You keep your mouth shut. You refuse to say why you've resigned. It's what Dean Acheson used to tell everyone, "FDR told me, you Dean, ^{when you} to resign from my cabinet in the '30s as Treasury Secretary" - I think it was Treasury Secretary, Commerce, an assistant secretary - "You resigned over the gold standard issue in a gentlemanly way. You didn't criticize, you didn't expose. This is the way you do it." And Acheson passed that advice on to a whole succession of people later. Oppenheimer and Conant, when they

opposed the H-Bomb, Acheson specifically told them this story, which he told many other peoples.

“If you go, go if you must, but do it a gentleman’s way. Don’t embarrass the President.” And that’s what they did. And the H-Bomb was exploded and the race was on for thermonuclear ~~and~~ and the extinction of the human race moved ahead before us. They should not have done that. So what is the alternative? The non-Acheson way, which is this. Ideally, without resigning, McNamara could’ve told Fulbright: “I’ll come to your hearing in 1966. Fulbright held hearings, which McNamara refused to attend. He was invited. Rusk was invited. He refused. Hearings now on where we were going in Vietnam and what to do. McNamara at this point had already written a memo to the President in November, saying there’s 50-50 chance that we’re going toward, two years or three years from now, an escalation, a stalemate at a much higher level. And as I said the other day, 50-50 is better than not mentioning it at all, but a better estimate would’ve been 90 to 10. That’s where we’re going. McNamara knew that.

When the bombing halt, which he had pushed for failed - ended without negotiations in early ’66, McNamara had agreed, “Okay, if there’s no movement, start the bombing again.” He told J.K. Galbraith at that time, and Arthur Schlesinger at Cambridge, “Our best, our only solution now is withdrawal with honor.”

What is honor? But withdrawal, get out of there. He was more explicit to Averill Harriman, ambassador at large. Harriman wrote a memo for the record, eyes only, for my use, personal memo: “Robert McNamara the other day told me that the time has come” - this is the Spring of ’66 - “We must negotiate directly with the NLF, and be prepared to offer them a share in power in Saigon.” That was the game, that’s what they were fighting for. They wanted more than that, but nothing less than that would stop them from fighting. If you’re prepared to give that, you could end the war. Not with a success, but you could end the war.

That was “eyes only.” I have no knowledge, no indication that McNamara said that to the President. He said it to Harriman. He did say it to the President a year later in '67, in a memo of May 19, 1967. And he reiterated it November 1, 1967. And he was fired over to the World Bank within a week of his having said that. But he did say it. He did not make it public. In fact, it was so closely held that the Pentagon Papers didn't have access to it. It's not in the Pentagon Papers. The President himself I think released that memo for the first time in his memoirs. What if he'd given those memos to Fulbright in February of '66, or '67, later? Something he never did.

Tell Fulbright: “Call me, I'll come. Ask me for the following documents: chk chk chk chk chk. You'll get them.” And he could bring with him people like Paul Warnke, Harriman, others, Galbraith, others. And Generals who would back up exactly what he said. He could've given the full Pentagon Papers that came out later. You know, not in Pentagon Papers form but in the original form of the cables. He could've provided that all to Congress as Secretary of Defense. Now the President would want to fire him at that point-- Might not be too easy. If he did, Saturday Night Massacre time. That would've been a tremendous upheaval. If he'd fired McNamara for telling the truth about what he felt. If McNamara didn't want to give an actual memo he'd written to the President, to Congress, on the grounds of executive privilege, you retype it with a different heading. Same memo. Memo for the record. Here is what I believe should be done. Same thing he'd said to the President. But, is he forbidden to tell Congress the truth? On the contrary, he has a Constitutional responsibility, never observed, to tell the Congress the truth.

Q: He would've been disloyal to LBJ.

A: Right. Loyal only to the Constitution and to the country. He would've been disloyal to LBJ and to the Democratic Party. Actually there is a Federal Code of Ethics. It was passed

under Eisenhower in 1958 by Congress, which starts out, "Every federal official should put loyalty to the Constitution, his country, and to the highest moral principals, above loyalty to person, party, or government agency." Now that may or may not seem heretical to you, but it is the opposite of the code of values that informs the loyalties of virtually every executive branch official. It's just the opposite, the reverse. Loyalty to the Constitution - what does that mean, to Congress? Because the Constitution says Congress shall make the decision on war and peace. Congress shall decide what expenditures to make. On the basis of information. Congress has the right of inquiry, Congress has the right not to be lied to by government officials.

That should go above my loyalty to the man who hired me? My party chief? Commander in Chief, who has honored me with his trust? Unthinkable. I mean the issue doesn't even arise. The definition of character, to McNamara I'm sure - having read more of what he's written - and to most people like him, the definition of character is to be trustable by one's boss. It's the highest rule. And most of them don't think of ^{it} as an absolute rule, they just act as if it's an absolute rule. So they act in a way that is not really distinguishable from someone in a Soviet state, or a Fascist state, ^{it} That believes in sort of the Fuhrer principle: The leader, the leader above all. Oath to the Fuhrer. I didn't take an oath to the President. I took an oath to uphold the Constitution. And I'd been violating it every year I worked for the executive branch. Ever year. As had the President and everybody who worked for him. He's the only elected one.

All the ones who did what they did were all violating the Constitution and their oath. And I decided, finally, to stop doing that. Ironically, I saw that Federal Code of Ethics - at the bottom of it, it's a number of precepts, and the bottom it says, "This shall be displayed in every federal office." Well I'd never seen it before. I saw it in 1970, in La Tuna Prison in New Mexico. I was visiting my friend Randy Keeler. I'd started copying the Pentagon Papers a year before. They hadn't come out yet. So I was in a visiting room waiting for him, and I

see this Federal Code of Ethics on the wall and I read it. It said, "Shall put loyalty to the Constitution, to country, and to the highest moral principles above loyalty to person, party, or government agency." And I thought, "Jesus, that's what I did. That's what I'm doing." It seemed amazing. And I realized that I'd never done it before I started this, and that no one else was observing that.

Q: But it isn't harder, I mean, psychologically speaking, to put loyalty to truth, to the Constitution, to whatever higher principle over loyalty to your boss. If you're Secretary of State you're actually betraying someone who you're spending every day with. If you're Daniel Ellsberg you've much lower down the totem pole. It's much easier to say, "Okay, the President isn't my friend. The President isn't the person I spend all day with every day. Screw him."

A: Psychologically there's certainly a difference there. If John McNaughton had been alive in 1969, who I revered as a boss, I really loved him--

Q: John McNaughton was?

A: Was the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. I'd been his special assistant. Now the Pentagon Papers made McNaughton look very bad. And they made McNamara look very bad. I knew that they were very unfair to McNaughton as an evidence of what he believed. Because I knew that he personally believed the opposite of what he was writing. Virtually everything he wrote for McNamara, was, as I'm sure McNamara knew, totally against what McNaughton actually believed. He didn't want to start bombing; he didn't want to keep bombing. He didn't want to keep the war going. He did not believe the domino theory; he did not believe it affected our security.

If we just got out of Vietnam and out of Southeast Asia - I even thought of him as a kind of closet isolationist. A wonderful person, and generally liberal person, but he hadn't really grasped, I thought - you know, I was ten years younger than he was. He hasn't really absorbed the Cold War. I was very much of a Cold War Era. He seems to be willing to sort of let the Communists win this one. Which he basically was, in Vietnam. But he didn't write it that way. He wouldn't have put anything like that in writing that could leak to the Joint Chiefs, or to the Congress. He did what McNamara wanted. And McNamara, for reasons that were not clear to either of us, seemed determined to get the bombing started. To this day, I can only guess at why McNamara was doing that.

It seemed crazy. I could think of different reasons for doing it but I didn't know which, if any of those, actually applied. I would still love to talk to McNamara and ask him, really what in your mind were you trying to do when you got that bombing started? I have a guess on it, and it isn't discreditable even. And then later, why did you go for the 100,000 increase in July of '65? Again, I have a guess, and it's not even discreditable. But as much as what he often faces. But I don't know. It was enigmatic. Both of those decisions looked crazy. Not just questionable, crazy. And the closer you get to the documents the more mysterious it all is. How could they have done this?

You could say, how could I have been part of it? It's what Patricia asked me later. Well the answer to that was, "I'm doing what the boss wants. I'm part of this system. And I tell him what I think, and then if he overrules me, etc. etc., we're doing it." It's not a good answer, but that's the answer I would give. Is that what McNamara - is it simple as that?

I'm sure he thought he was doing what his boss wanted, the President. And was doing within the constraints - I suspect that the Pentagon Papers, the documentary record, misrepresents McNamara's personal thinking as much as I know the Pentagon Papers misrepresents John McNaughton's thinking. When McNaughton would write to McNamara to give him papers

he could give the President, “We must do this for this and that reason.” He didn’t believe any of that. He didn’t believe we should do it, or that these were good reasons. But they were the best reasons that he could come up with as a lawyer for doing what the President wanted doing.

So I suspect that’s true of McNamara, but I haven’t had the chance to ask him because he won’t talk to me. He’s told other people. He talks to Vo Nguyen Giap, you know, the commanding general on the other side, and drinks champagne. But he won’t talk to Daniel Ellsberg. And he’s told a friend of his and mine: “Ellsberg has bad character.” I don’t know what that’s based on actually. Other than, I think, this definition of character: I betrayed him, because I embarrassed him with Johnson. Johnson didn’t want that stuff out, he was retired. Rusk didn’t want it out. They held McNamara responsible for having made this study and not told them about it, and letting it out. And I think he felt very embarrassed by that and it’s unforgivable in his eyes.

Too bad, because I think the world has a lot to learn from McNamara that he’s never said. And I think actually, I could suggest questions to him that would help him unravel, in his own mind to some extent, what he was up to. I have my own hypotheses as to what he was doing. But he’s never come close to expressing it. And that’s why many aspects of Vietnam remain real mystery. What happened in ’64, ’65, is still very mysterious. Hard to understand 40 years later. And McNamara is the one left alive, who could unravel a lot of that if he would really open up. And he hasn’t. With you, or anybody else.

Q: What is your theory?

A: Yeah, good question. Let me-- Thank you.

Q: Maybe we should just stop for a moment.

Q: I mean it's a question that I keep thinking about. That someone like McNamara, and I didn't even want to talk about McNamara but I'm being somehow drawn into it anyway. That someone like McNamara - it's so much part of this inner circle, part of this group. That there's something about human psychology, that if you're betraying someone in an immediate group, your family, your parents, your wife, your children, close associates that you see every day. That somehow there's some difference for a person in that position, than for example a person who is maybe not a complete outsider, but more of an outsider. That it makes it possible. That there's something about a herd mentality, or a group mentality that prevents us from doing that?

A: I think that's well put. I think that it is our herd instincts, our follow the leader instincts, our conform to the rest of the herd instincts, that are leading us over a cliff. I just read recently, by the way, that lemmings don't after all follow a leader over a cliff regularly. It was a newspaper story maybe a week ago. But actually, the explanation for their great changes in population had to do with cyclical changes in their predators. Storks and eagles, and owls of certain kinds. When there's lots of lemmings, these things eat lots of lemmings and become numerous and drive the lemmings down very far. And then they lose food, they die off, and the lemmings rise again.

But we humans then are more like the myth of the lemmings in a way, I would say. Our only real predators are other humans. And they're a-plenty. And our willingness to follow leaders, it would seem, literally over a cliff, has very little inhibition. Arthur ^{Kessler} Kessler said, in a book called *Janus*, that the dangerous motivations - the dangerous emotions in humanity - he found, he concluded, were not aggressiveness or self-assertiveness, but our group instincts. Our obedience to leaders when they lead us in wrong directions. Our determination to be part of a group and to pay the price of being part of that group. In other words, it's a group

feeling, not a self-serving feeling in itself. It's our group identity that's most precious to us, and that we don't want to lose. That is something I think I've learned since the Vietnam War.

How could it be that so many people - I've asked myself for a very long - could've kept up the bombing when they didn't believe it was doing any good? Which was from '68 on. Mort Halperin once told me in '68 - when he was in the Pentagon - said, "You know there's three people in this town who believe in what we're doing." Which was, this was now after Tet, after the supposed bombing halt. We were still bombing very heavily in South Vietnam. No one that we knew believed that was serving any purpose at all. But it was killing a lot of people and losing some Americans in the process. ^{He} I said "Rusk, the President, and Walt Rostow?"

And that seemed rhetorical or something, but then we sat at the desk for awhile and tried to think if we'd add anybody to that list, and we couldn't think of anyone we knew. I was in the Pentagon Papers group, 36 people, some of them very, even reactionary in their political views. Several of the officers, who were very friendly with me - they're all very collegial. But a couple of them came to be major figures under Reagan in running the Contra effort, actually. One of them was the commander of the effort that was targeting my daughter in Nicaragua, later. But at the time, they'd all been in Vietnam, the military people. And they felt just as strongly as I do, we should not be there, we should get out of there. That was '67. And early '68 they felt the same, and the rest of the country had come to feel that. As Cronkite said, "We should be out of there." But the war had seven years to go. We dropped more bombs, four times as many bombs, after Tet as McNamara had dropped before Tet.

Q: This is early 1968?

A: '68. We'd dropped one and a half million tons of bombs, or as much as in all of World War II, before the Tet Offensive. And before McNamara left, which was one month later in

March 1. We dropped six million more tons, four times as many, after he left. So the period during which he was totally silent was a period of far greater tonnage of bombs than he'd presided over. And he kept silent all during that time while they were falling on Vietnamese. And he certainly felt it was doing no good. But my point is they were being dropped by people who thought it was doing no good.

Now as Mort has reminded me, when I've mentioned that, in my book - he said, "You know, make it clear that they didn't all agree that the best thing to do was to stop. Many of the military thought we should double, re-double, but hit different targets. That we should be destroying Vietnam, totally, in a way we weren't doing. We should be going bigger. But if you weren't going to do that then get out. What we were doing was worthless." And they carried it on. All that period.

So that was a puzzle to me for a long time. We seemed to be acting like Germans, like good Germans. The only image somebody of my generation could think of. And really, when I read Stanley Milgram's work, *Obedience To Authority*, it finally was a great eye-opener to me. His book, which summarizes a great many experiments, but they surround getting subjects to perform what amounts to torture of another supposed subject. Giving them electric shocks when they give the wrong answer to a memory test. So you raise the shock level, you raise the shock level, and actually, this was all made up. The supposed other subject was pretending to be in agony, and finally to be silent, possibly dead. But it fooled all the subjects that have done this. It's been done now a thousand times probably. And they all believed that they were delivering regular shocks. And as long as they were told to do it by the experimenter - they would sometimes protest in the face of the screams of the other subject. It started at Yale but they've done it all over the world now.

The other person would be screaming, and then going silent, say, "No, I won't go on." And the experimenter would say - he had four rote formulas. The first protest he would say,

“Please go on.” If that wasn’t enough to get the person to push the electrical button again, he would say, “You must go on.” If somebody protested even at that point he would say, “You have no choice, you must continue.” And that got everybody essentially in there. And they would press to a level, which they believed might have caused the death of this other subject in the course of this. As his screams went silent. The very startling experiment, which I say has now been reproduced all over the world.

Meaning that, as he put it, the obedience to authority was so ingrained that even though the authority was just a pickup person they’d never seen before in a laboratory coat, I think that they would carry on this torture - ordinary people, a real cross-section of anybody. In other words, human inhibitions to damaging another human are not non-existent, but they’re much less confining than we humans imagine. It’s easier ^{than we imagine} to get people to do terrible things to other people if you present it to them in a framework – but, in particular, of authority, of an experiment, advancing knowledge.

Looking at other experiments, forms of that - Milgram has died. I came to know him before he died. I’ve concluded though that from other experiments, that he didn’t have the whole answer. That it wasn’t just authority. Other people did experiments that didn’t involve authority. They just involved agreement. You promise to follow this procedure. You promise. You get some minimal little financial rewards for this. Or none. People found that because they’d promised to keep pushing the button if the other gave the wrong answer, they couldn’t keep from doing it, as if a promise were irrevocable. Or, you know, no matter how it had been given. Others, other experiments, showed that mere conformity would do it. Others were doing it, so they did it. There were about ten ways to get people to push those buttons.

What that revealed to me, in abstract laboratory form, was an explanation for the mysteries of Vietnam and of a lot of other things. We humans have a wrong self-image about how hard it is to get us to harm other humans. We nice people: virtuous; good character; good

background. People, by the way, who were asked to predict how others like them would behave in the Milgram experiments, all mis-predicted. No one ever predicted the correct results, that nearly everyone would push those buttons. In other words, they perceived their colleagues wrong; they perceived themselves wrongly.

In Vietnam, as in World War I, where men were sent against the wire and the machine guns day after day, and simply mowed down like targets in a shooting gallery in the mud. The orders kept going out, and the people kept obeying. Year after year. Rather than admit failure, rather than admit to the top people this is wrong, you must stop this, you must negotiate. It went on and on. The bombing of World War II, our strategic bombing, achieved nothing. That's certainly true in Germany. It didn't shorten the war by a day. It extended it by diverting resources to aircraft, and bombing aircraft, and fuel, and crews, and education. That could've been used on landing boats or on anti-submarine, anti-aircraft process. Things that would've been far better at shortening the war.

But they went on because airmen wanted a separate Air Force after the war. They wanted to show that they had not only contributed to the ending of the war, they hoped to prove that they alone, in Japan, had won victory. LeMay was driven he says in his own interviews that I just read the other day - more clearly than I'd read it before, by the way. He was driven by a determination to end the war before there was an invasion - without an invasion. To show that the Air Force could do it by itself, with this firebombing. And that was enough motive to get him to burn women and children down in massive numbers. That was accomplishing nothing. It did not shorten the war. If the war had ended a week after the Tokyo raid, or a month after, he'd have to say, "Well, killed 100,000 people but they ended the war." It would look that way, and especially if when they opened the archives in Japan it turned out that the Japanese general said, "Well we can't let this go on."

No Japanese general said that, or admiral. In fact the Cabinet, ^{minutes} Dulles - you'd hardly know, that this was happening out there. They just didn't care about their people particularly. And the people - it was a dictatorship, the people had no say particularly. So they were being slaughtered for nothing. It was after, months after the Tokyo bombing, and the other cities, in the other cities, that the Okinawa campaign started. The bloodiest of the entire war. So it was no indicated effect of it at all, and yet nobody protested. ^{Everybody} Nobody went on. In fact it's hard to find that there was any debate about that.

One thing that's almost always left out of discussion of Hiroshima is this: what lay behind Harry Truman's - what might seem strange statement that he'd not felt the dropping of the bomb to be a moral issue. He said, "I never lost an hour's sleep over it" - over the bombing of Hiroshima. Actually I understand that very easily. When he came into office, in May, we had been killing Japanese civilians to the greatest extent of our capability every day of the week since March. That was under FDR. So he inherited a situation in which our project in the Pacific was to kill Japanese civilians. We tried to create a firestorm every night. But never did, after Tokyo. We tried to reproduce that every night. We didn't, so we killed as many as we could, without producing a firestorm. And it added up to perhaps 600,000 or 900,000 people.

The nuclear bomb did not present a moral issue in that context. It didn't kill as many people as you'd killed in Tokyo. Neither one of them did. It was just a way of doing with one bomb what had otherwise took 300 bombers to do. Is that a moral issue? It was more efficient. Was it likely to end the war quickly? No, they couldn't see any reason why it would end the war quickly. Particularly. Why should it? We had already been doing the same. It did mean you could create a firestorm every time. That was a key thing. So you could get a whole center of a city wherever you aimed it.

But since the Japanese had lost so many already, and they were evacuating all - how many were they prepared to kill? Was there any limit? Not for LeMay, but we know LeMay. How about Stimson? How about Truman? Too many? No indication, actually. Truman did hold off the third bomb. It's said he didn't like the thought of killing all those women and children. But that was because he was at a point when he was prepared to end the war by offering to keep the emperor at that point. You asked me the other day by the way what I really think the reasons were for ending the war. This gets out of our immediate discussion, but shall I tell you? There are really several reasons. It wasn't just to intimidate the Russians. You have to understand - I have just put one more thing into the equation there. The fact is that there was no moral issue about using the bomb. There was a different dimension of moral issue: should we start a nuclear era? Some of the scientists were beginning to think about that, in Chicago in particular, not in Los Alamos. Should we set the precedent for using this bomb, looking at the future? That was a very important issue. But almost nobody in Washington looked at that issue.

Given then that it was just a question of whether you use this weapon or not, it hardly arose as a question. Only one person, Ralph Bard from the Navy office, did raise it as a moral issue. Generally it wasn't.

✓ Q: You know, there's a very interesting passage that I read recently, in a collection of Feynman, Richard Feynman's essays. And Feynman said that - he was unsure whether he should work on the bomb. Unclear about whether he should do this. But he set up some kind of argument in his mind. He said, is it possible to build such a weapon? He said yes. And if it is possible, will it be built? Yes. If we can build it, can they build it? Yes. Should we build it first if they can build it? Yes. And so he agreed to go to Los Alamos and work on the bomb.

His concern, as a young Jew, was with Germany. With Europe. And he said that after VE Day, after the war was lost in Europe, he said, "Properly speaking, I should've in my own mind revisited that moral decision. Because the reasons that I had made that decision initially were no longer valid. And yet I did not do that." And he said, "Why, I can't tell you. I just didn't."

yes And I thought that it's saying something. Because here we're talking about one of the brightest men of the 20th Century. We're talking about - that people make moral decisions and then don't ever go back. The reasons that they've made that initial decision may no longer be valid, or all their assumptions may have been shown to be false, but having made the decision, that's it.

A: Well that's the rule. There are exceptions. One man did leave the Manhattan Project when he realized that there would be no German bomb. His name was Joseph ^{Rosenblatt} Rosenblatt. He was one of the very first people - he worked first in London on the possibility of a bomb, then brought over to Los Alamos. He was a Polish émigré. He later got the Nobel Peace Prize in the name of Pugwash, which he founded - the joint collaborative explorations with the Russians and American scientists. He by the way drafted the Einstein-Russell Manifesto, calling on scientists of the world: "Remember your humanity and forget the rest." That they should not work on nuclear weapons and that they should - this was in the '50s. But he was the one man who left the Manhattan Project and he did it before VE Day.

Q: One man.

Wilson A: One man. And so it shows that it can be done, by the way. But it's not the rule. There were others, by the way, who did look back with great regret that they had not changed after VE Day. Like Feynman. Because many of them did see themselves as racing the Germans. And I've thought over that decision many, many times. As I think I told you, early in my life

I saw that as a key human decision that had been made. As one of my many obsessions was to try and understand the decision making that went into that. So I read practically everything there was to read on the decision about the bomb. And there are many aspects to it.

^{that} Rosenblatt, like the rest, believed that he was deterring a German use of the bomb by our possession of it. And he came to reexamine the logic of that later, but that was his principle. I, having thought about this thirty or forty years now, can't really fault the people in the project who believed they were deterring a German bomb. It was not the only way to think about it but it was, seems to me, a reasonable and moral way. Although it involves building an element - an instrument of great destruction. In other words, the idea of deterrence doesn't seem to me, *a priori*, under all circumstances, wrong. You know, or rejectable. But then, what happens when you discover you don't have any enemy that you have to deter? At that point, what do you with the instrument that you've been building? Well Rosenblatt learned two things in the summer of 1944. He had dinner with Leslie Groves, not the only time, the head of the project, the Manhattan Project. And Groves remarked, in the course of the dinner, "This bomb will not be ready in time for Germany. But it's not for Germany, anyway, it's for Russia. This bomb is to confront the Russians."

And Rosenblatt, as a Pole, no fan of the Russians, was shocked at this statement. Startled by it. And, it turns out, Leslie Groves from the very beginning was extremely anti-communist. ^{By now} Like, let's say, Edward Teller. Like certain other people involved. But, and had his eye sort of on the Bolsheviks in the end as the people to hold off. Not necessarily to use it on, but, you know, to brandish it. For deterrence. Then later that fall, Rosenblatt got a visit from his former boss in Britain, ^{Pearls} Pearle, who told him that the ^{ALSO} Alsace Project, which had been searching for German atomic scientists - It was quite clear that there was no German program. This was well before VE Day. It was in the fall of '44. Rosenblatt said he was convinced by what his boss told him.

And it turns out by the way, that information was available to Oppenheimer and so forth. You didn't have to believe it, necessarily. It might've been false. Might've been wrong. But Rosenblatt did believe it, and, as far as he knows, Oppenheimer believed it. But they had to keep the pressure on to keep this bomb going. He said if he had told what he'd heard from his British boss to the rest of the group, a number of them would've stopped at that point, early on. But he did tell his misgivings then, or his desire to leave, to the head of the project. And he did leave at that time. But was induced by a coercive process, a kind of blackmail that I won't go into at this moment. He ^{left} leaved on the condition that he'd not tell anyone why he was leaving. Not share what he had heard about the German program with any of his colleagues. So, he did. He did that. And he went back to Britain without having told his colleagues what he'd become convinced: that there was no German program.

After the bomb, after the VE day then, a number of scientists in Los Alamos - in Chicago actually - began to feel, "Now let's look at the future of this bomb. Clearly we're moving toward using it on Japan. Is that a good thing to do? Should we do it? What's our opinion? How do we see the future?" So this committee I mentioned the other day under James Frank, the Frank Committee, concluded actually, that the effects of using the bomb would be to guarantee a nuclear arms race with the Russians in the first instance. It might not be possible to avert that under any circumstances, but it would be impossible if we dropped the bomb on Japan. They would certainly then go for their own program.

What you'd hope for otherwise is an agreement that could be tested - that could be verified. And by the way, a testing agreement was not hard to verify - an atmospheric testing agreement. You should try to get that, and try to get an international authority that would control this weapon. And make an effort to avert an uncontrolled arms race. And it said, "In view then of that, it could be worth refraining from using the bomb. Even if using it would save American lives." That it might be too costly, and too dangerous, to start this race - or

would be, actually. Even if there were lives at stake, at this point. So they made this report, it was essentially bottled up. That's another story.

It never got to Truman as far as we know. Szilard then, the first person to go to Einstein and persuade him to persuade Roosevelt to get the Manhattan Project started, started a petition. And he got many signatures, over 100 signatures, in Chicago and in Oak Ridge calling on the President not to use the bomb even if it would save American lives. On this point, actually, he made it a second petition to get more names on it, which didn't flatly say "Don't do it" - which the first petition did. But said, "Don't do this without considering, you know, the major dangers and costs of doing this. And the moral aspects of doing it. Even if lives are at stake." And the implication too was, you should consult the scientists and the people who know what the future is like, and so forth.

He sent that to Teller at Los Alamos. Teller consulted with Oppy, Oppenheimer. And did not distribute the petition at Los Alamos. And it never got to Truman. Szilard's conclusion from that was that he had been mistaken to work through channels on this thing. And in fact he wrote a little fantasy later, in a book he called *Voice of the Dolphins: My Trial as a War Criminal*. And he imagined a trial - that Russians had somehow conquered the United States and he was put on trial as having worked on the Manhattan project, which he helped start. He was one of the key people in starting. And he presented in his defense, or his lawyer presented in his defense, "But I signed this petition. I circulated this petition. I did what I could to avert this use of the bomb. Which, with all of its implications later." And the prosecutor says, "Bah. You knew that petition would never get to Truman. There was no way that was going to get past Groves, and Stimson." Which was true, actually. Didn't even get to Stimson until after Potsdam, in fact after the bomb was dropped I think. "You knew that, you were just salving your own conscience."

And he said, "I had to admit, well, there's truth to that." I mean, he sort of accepts his sentence. Something I read later was a letter written by Eugene Rabinowitch, who later became head of the Federation of American Scientists and the editor of *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist*. He had been the *rapporteur*, the drafter of the Frank Report. He wrote it while I was underground. So I didn't see it. I wasn't seeing the *New York Times* every day then. And somebody sent it to me later. And he said, "The current controversy about Daniel Ellsberg," - and my name had come up by that time - "giving the Pentagon Papers to the press, has put me in mind of a decision that I faced in the spring of 1945." He said, he summarized the Frank report.

He said, "The question arose of whether we should use this bomb as a *fait accompli* against Japan without ever having ever told Congress and the public that it existed." He said, "Now there was no question left" - I'm paraphrasing here a little an article he wrote later. He said, "There was no question that it would give it to the Germans, because they'd been defeated on May 8th. And we knew the Japanese did not have a bomb. It was a question, then, of involving Congress and the public in this decision."

"public
would
know
eventually"

Q: Whether or not to keep it secret?

A: Whether he should keep it secret from the Congress and the public. Follow? He said, "I spent sleepless nights over this decision. Whether I should reveal the existence of the bomb, and the plan to use it on Japan." And he said, "In the end, I did not. But I always, I still feel, that I would have been justified if I had done so."

Q: We have to stop for a second. We just ran out. Could we reload it just quickly?

A: You know, you were talking about "is it all lying?" You know, these people lie all the time. Different subject. Why do I emphasize lying so much? And actually, I'm often asked

that question. My old company commander in the Marines, Colonel Peyton Robertson, read my manuscript and he said, "You know, I'm very much in favor of this; I love this book." And he'd heard what I was saying on the radio about Iraq. "Can't you stop saying 'lying'? Do you have to use that word, 'lying'? You lose a lot of support when you say that; people don't want to hear that. And you can say it some other way, but you shouldn't say 'lie' all the time," and so on.

Q: Did he have a better word for you?

A: Well, mislead. I don't think he suggested - just don't emphasize this aspect of the phenomenon. And the truth is that most of the deception and the deceiving and the misleading is constant. Nothing that an official says about his motives, or the government's motives for doing something, or what the program is meant to achieve, or what they consider are the important reasons for doing this - they never give the whole truth there; they always give what will sell the program best. They never tell all the motives and they never tell the main motives, so it's deceptive, it's misleading, always, always.

If somebody suggests that "why don't we just let it all hang out?" That came out once in Watergate: "Tell them exactly why we're doing this." That person would be, probably, let go of for further meetings. He wouldn't be allowed in the room. He'd be so naïve, people would think that he was unduly influenced by some vision of truth. Which is not what this game is, exactly; we're selling a policy.

You could say, "Well, if we told all the reasons they see we're coherent and we have reasons, and so forth." But the reaction would be, "You can always do better than that. Maybe we'd get away with telling the truth, but there'd always be vulnerabilities. People would pick on this, pick on that side. The point is to make a story here that will protect us, and that will get us the support we need."

So they don't start from the truth as an explanation, as a basis for what they tell the public. They start from the notion of what the public wants to hear about this product, basically, like a consumer. Anyway, I was thinking, "Sure, of course, most of the deception cannot be called a flat lie." Okay, that's kind of a fallback. If you have to lie, you lie. And you usually do have to, to some extent.

But most of it is done by leaving things out, by saying "here are the reasons." And they may be among the reasons, but you're not telling the main reasons. It's not exactly a flat lie. And it occurred to me this morning that as a kid magician, I sort of learned that. You know what magicians operate is with misdirection. Not by lying, but by focusing people's attention in a way that will mislead them.

I thought of this example this morning. Can you focus this on my hands?

[PAUSE]

A: Now, did I lie?

[PAUSE]

A: There's no lying, but I've never done this to a television camera before. But the point I'm now going to illustrate, which I've only shown to small boys who I was introducing into magic, the nature of misdirection. And one girl - I finally broken the gender barrier, which magicians are never supposed to do; I showed it to my granddaughter. That the essence of this does not have to do with lying, it's misdirection, and the misdirection is this: it's the finger. It's not "the hand is quicker than the eye," it's that the eye follows the pointing finger. Do you follow that?

Q: Could you do it once again, please?

A: [Laughter] How many times? You're not supposed to repeat a trick.

[INTERRUPTION]

A: You with me or not? You following this? What you do is, you pick the coin out of the person's ear.

[INTERRUPTION]

A: You got the idea.

[INTERRUPTION]

A: And then, it's in your ear, okay? So it's a question of - can you see me?

Q: Yes.

A: You see my hands?

[PAUSE]

A: I need a coat to do this. Okay.

[PAUSE]

A: Sometimes I do this to a peace group and say, "For hope, we need change. But is change possible? Why not?"

[PAUSE]

A: And for change, where does change come from? From within. Now you notice, there's no necessity to do any lying in the course of that, and there was no hypnotism. It's just a question of guiding people's attention one way rather than another. Okay, we were talking about something quite different.

Q: Still it goes back to my belief - maybe I have this bias. My bias is that people far more often are self-deceived. They have very little knowledge of their own motivation, of their own intentions.

A: That happens with politicians as much as anybody else. You're right, there's no argument. So what are we disagreeing about, if anything?

Q: Well, it goes back to the use - maybe I have the same problem that your friend does, is that the end result is untruth, people speaking things which are clearly untrue. But do they represent an intent to deceive, or are they deceiving themselves?

A: If they are responsible to an organization, to a boss, or for that matter, to subordinates, to a cause. If membership in a group means that you keep the secrets of that group - which it always does, basically. Then, if it's a really good secret, a well-kept secret, it's not enough if someone asks you, "Have you read this report? Are you aware of whether anybody knows about this or that?" If you're really trying to keep that secret, it's not enough to say, "I can't tell you, that's a secret," or say, you can try to change the subject. You can try to leave the room and say, "Oh, I have an appointment," and hope the person forgets the question.

Or you can lie. And if you can't lie effectively, you will not be given secrets of that group anymore.

So we're talking about, very specifically, a promise to keep secrets, a need to keep secrets. And to do that well, you have to be good at lying, saying, "No, I don't know about that. No, I don't know that person," and so forth. You're trained in this, you're practiced, you're tested constantly in the government on this. And if you're not good at it, if you feel that you have to betray - I'm kidding you - by a little giggle or a wink, or something like that, you're out. You don't get those secrets anymore. You can still perhaps be a member of the group, but not one who's trusted with secrets of the group anymore. You don't have the access.

If you have been keeping really good secrecy - and a lot of secrets are very, very well kept. The notion that "everything comes out in *The New York Times*" is a cover. It's a fairy tale; it's a cover story. That's not the case. Secrets can be very well kept for half a century and more, much more, if necessary. Twenty years, 30 years, no problem. And not everybody is up to doing that, but enough are that you can run a government.

Q: Here's something that's occurred to me while talking: that somehow you moved from one group to another. That when you were able to leak this material, that you had the support of a new family, that you were - well, you know what I'm saying.

A: Yes, and that's a hopeful side of it. I mean, you're not really jumping off the face of the earth when you tell secrets. But it may feel that way, and it may be pretty much like that.

To go back: in '68, I wasn't leaking to anybody; I didn't see Neil Sheehan after that. I went back to RAND knowing that I'd done this. Knowing, by the way, that "Hmm, they probably knew who it was." And in fact, I even heard that Clark Clifford had been told by Paul Nitze,

“It’s surprising to find how much Dan Ellsberg knew; that he knew all these documents.”
And they had identified me, essentially, but I wasn’t prosecuted.

Q: They had their eye on you?

A: Yeah, but then a new administration came in, anyway, after a year. But I knew I hadn’t been prosecuted, so I knew there was a chance - even for the Pentagon Papers - for some reason, they might choose not to prosecute me. I always knew there was a possibility. If they did, I was sure I’d go to prison, and I thought they probably would. But what family am I going to join if I’m in prison? I now know that if I was put in with other draft resisters or conscientious - it would be very nice people, some.

But really, Randy Keeler^h and Dave Harrison and some of the others didn’t have a lot of company in those prisons. They found it, as Randy was saying, a very good experience. He said, “Where else would I meet people from really all walks of life, and lower education, lower class, lower money, and so forth, all different ethnic backgrounds?” And I said, “Well, it’s like the Army.” And he said, “Yeah, it’s like military service; that’s what it does. I tell other people that,” he said. “Don’t assume that prison will be a terrible experience for you.” It wasn’t for him, he said.

But yeah, you do find there is family, but people can hardly imagine that as they face it, because they know those others will be so different and they’ll be of a group that they haven’t respected in the past. And you can’t just change that overnight.

I think I said earlier, I did lose the company of all the people I’d known. And I respected them very much, and they didn’t want to be in any touch with me for about 20 years till the Cold War ended. Then a few of them were willing to be in the same room with me. Before that, they wouldn’t. If I were in the room, they’d leave - and it happened at an academic

meeting or something - rather than give any indication that they found what I had done legitimate enough to associate with me in any context. Let's say, that's a price. And of course, I met new friends.

Q: Did they not associate with you because they disapproved of you, or they were afraid to be seen with you?

A: No way for me to know; I assume there was a mixture. They all had to be afraid. As one person that I knew did agree with me - well, I think I can name him now - his name was Konrad Kellen. He's in his late eighties now. He had been one of the six who, with me, signed a letter saying we should get out of Vietnam in one year. Not unlike, by the way, the announcement that was made today, that we will be out of Iraq by next June. That's less than a year from now; we'll see if that holds. But we said in '69, be out of Vietnam - with a deadline - a year from now. And Konrad was one of the main drafters.

no

Now Konrad had left Germany at the age of 17, speaking no other language but German, in 1933. He came over to the States eventually. He slept in a Wall Street office where he was sweeping floors, and he slept on the floor and for awhile, didn't speak any English to start with. And he later became the secretary to Albert Einstein, personal assistant, for a number of years. Then he came to RAND and did a lot of reading of VC prisoners' interrogation reports. But he was for getting out of Vietnam.

Why had he left Germany? He'd been skiing in Switzerland in the winter of 1933, beginning, and he came back. Hitler was in power, and a state of emergency - I think it was perhaps just after the Reichstag fire. But he came back and he was sitting with a friend in a café in Berlin. And a regiment of brownshirts started marching down the street, singing songs and so forth. And he said to his friend, "What are those bozos up to?" And the said, "Sssh! Sssh!"

Konrad said, "What do you mean?" He says, "You can't talk like that now. Everything's different now."

He left Germany the next day. And I said, "How could you do that, Konrad? How could you just go?" He says, "I didn't like the way things were going." He got out of Germany at a good time. His father, by the way, who was only *half*-Jewish - I didn't know he was - thought he would escape because he was only half-Jewish. And he failed; he was killed. Kellen didn't go because he felt Jewish, actually; his father was half-Jewish. He just didn't like the way things were going.

So here was a guy who had protested the Vietnam War by this letter, very strongly. So when I was up from underground and I was arraigned, he was the one person that I called at RAND to be in touch with because I looked at him as kind of a father figure. I loved him. And he said, "Oh, Dan, I've been on vacation. That's wonderful, let's go to lunch." Later I called him to see where we'd have lunch. He says, "Uh, I can't do that; I can't do it." He'd talked to somebody. And people at RAND were told not to come to meetings that I was at, by the way, even years later. I said, "Well, Konrad, when can we do it?" He says, "I think we'd better wait till this blows over." I said, "Konrad, that may be 100 years." And he says, "Well, I know, I know, but I think we better wait till it's over."

So much later, years went by, and I found myself for the first time in a meeting, chaired by McGeorge Bundy, actually. And it was in honor of an old friend of mine, Bernard Brodie, who died, from RAND. The one person at RAND who had volunteered to testify at my trial, Bernard Brodie, the dean of American military historians and the first person who had seen the potential of the atom bomb. He actually wrote a book about the implications for deterrence. So Brodie had told me - he says, "The reason I'm willing to testify for you is that I'm old enough that I don't care when I lose my clearance. If I lose my clearance, I don't care anymore." He had long retired.

And another man, by the way, who had signed the letter with us -

Q: Is losing your clearance “expulsion from the club”?

A: Yes, that’s what they did to Oppenheimer, was take away his clearance. They didn’t put him in prison. That meant not just the club; it meant you can’t have access to the information that your peers have; you can’t take part in the discussions they have; you can’t be invited into the room to discuss these matters. We’re talking now about special clearances on the whole. And if you don’t have access to those, you can’t be in the room, you can’t make your voice known, you can’t be trusted with your comrades to hear this information. And basically, since your job - at RAND or in the Pentagon - depends on that clearance, you’ve lost your job.

Okay, go to another job, one without a clearance. That means not State, not Defense, not CIA, not the White House, not the FBI. It means leaving that whole line of national security work and going back to an academy, to the other people who know only what they read in *The New York Times*, which you know from inside is a lot of smoke, mostly. So you go back to understanding that you don’t know what’s going on. And so it’s more than just career, but it’s also career. You lose your career.

So anyway, I was at this meeting and Konrad was -

Q: Is it exciting to “know”?

A: To be in the know, certainly. To feel everyone gets that particular perquisite and sense of excitement. Whether you have any influence on it or not, you may be a secretary, you may be a clerk. But you see these papers, you type the papers, you do whatever. You know that

what the other people are hearing on the evening news, or in *The New York Times*, or some “lesser” paper, is just blather; it’s just a sales pitch; it’s just nothing. You feel you know what’s going on. Now actually, what you may know is a lot of other blather. It’s also cover stories, and stupid and ignorant, and so forth, but it’s different from what the man in the street knows. And so you tell yourself you’re in the know, and that’s the very great benefit of being in the government.

Q: You’re special!

A: You’re more important. You’re part of an important machine, part of what’s really going on. Definitely. And the more clearances you have, the more special you feel.

Q: And you said there are 12 levels of clearance?

A: Oh, there’s any number of levels. See, we’ve got so many conversations going here.

Q: I’ll try to keep track of them.

A: [Laughter] Oh, let me finish the Kellen story. I was at this meeting and actually, McGeorge Bundy - who I knew from a number of occasions, though not at all well, but I’d met him a number of times - it was interesting that he, himself was willing to be polite to me. Well no, actually, that wasn’t so amazing. He had testified at my trial; that’s another story. He was one of the few who was willing to testify at my trial. Brodie, by the way, I believe died before he was able to do it or anything; it didn’t come up. So he [McGeorge Bundy] didn’t testify as a friend; he testified as an expert at my trial, and we didn’t have any contact at that time. But he had testified.

And so I'm later at this meeting and I remember, that was one of the first times when I said in public, "Every president, with the possible exception of Ford, has had occasion to seriously consider the use of nuclear weapons in an ongoing crisis." Every president. And he got red in the face and his veins were pounding, something I saw a few other times later. A sudden transition from a very bland, very polite, very diplomatic person. He said, "I served under two presidents, and that is absolutely not true!" And he pounded the table. "Kennedy and Johnson - that is absolutely not true of the presidents I served!" And I said, "Well," and I gave a couple instances. And he said, "No, that was not serious consideration," and so forth. And that's basically the tone he takes in his massive book, too, sort of a nuclear memoir that he writes. He was very involved in the subject.

Anyway, I remember that occasion in particular though, because there were some other RAND people at that, because Bernard Brodie was a RAND colleague, and supported me. The first time I'd been in a room with any of them for about 10 years; it was about 10 years after the trial. So I just went to Konrad, I didn't force myself on anybody else, and I said, "Konrad, let's talk." He says, "All right." I hadn't talked to him since the trial; I said, "Let's talk." And I took him over to another room. He said, "No, let's sit here." I can't imitate his accent, but he had a German accent still. And it was a room in full view of everybody else. It had some glass doors around it so everybody could see I was not giving him papers, or I was not doing whatever, whispering in his ear. He wanted to be very visible.

I said, "Konrad, I expected not to have any dealings with anybody at RAND when this happened because it would endanger them, and I understand that." And I said, "But really, you were the only one that I really wanted to talk to. And I really did feel very bad that you refused to talk to me." This is the only conversation I had like that with anybody. And he said, "Dan, let me tell you," he says, "after the letter came out, the others of us were clinging to our jobs ever after by our nails. We were all threatened with being fired," which I hadn't realized. I didn't know that. They were in a different department from me. He says, "Dan,

my clearance is like my penis. I cannot take any chances with it.” And what I’d realized already before that was, yes, this was a man who left Germany at 17 on one day’s notice under the Nazis. But he’d had a hard time, and he wasn’t about to do that again in his sixties; he wasn’t ready to do that.

And another man at RAND, a ^{Romanian} Hungarian refugee, said to me, “Dan, I would have signed that letter. I agreed with it.” We’d known better than to ask him to do it, actually; he would never have done it. But he said, “I would have signed it if I was ready to break my divorce agreement with my first wife, not pay for the tuition of my sons to Groton,” where they were, “give up this house, and take a Colonel Sanders ^{fried} friend chicken franchise with what capital I had, and live independently that way.” He said, “But you cannot work for RAND and sign that letter for getting out of Vietnam.” Something, by the way, that more than two-thirds of the public agreed with at that point; just saying, “we agree with the rest of the public.”

Q: The rest of the public saying that “we would like to get out”?

A: Get out of Vietnam. But to agree with that, and say that we were from RAND, that we had had access to classified information - we said that: “Access to official information.” In other words, “We, the ones who are agreeing with the public, do so not in ignorance of the data that the president has. We’ve seen the same data” - this was implied - “and we conclude - we’re not telling you what the data is; we’re not telling you anything classified. We’re telling you, having seen it, we believe we should get out in one year, and be out of there; that our security is better served by doing that. And we do not believe” - this is part of the letter - “that that will have nothing but good consequences for the people of Vietnam or this country. There may be great costs, but we believe those costs will not be less two years from now, or three years from now, and many more people will have died. So we should pay those costs now, whatever they are.” And as I’m hoping people are saying about Iraq right now, and effectively, what Joe Wilson is basically saying as former ambassador.

So it was after that, that actually my long friendship with Albert Wohlstetter who, like Konrad, I saw as a father at RAND. He was 19 years older, but he was my sort of patron at RAND. It turns out he became more conservative in later years. And he is the patron figure of most of the neocons - Wolfowitz, Pearl, ^{et al} and the others who are running our policy now. But he wasn't that conservative at the time. And he totally broke off relations with me, and I'd been very close to him and his wife.

And we wrote this letter saying we should get out. Harry Rowen, the president of RAND, to our surprise told us we should put it on RAND letterhead. We handed it to him to look at, on blank paper, no letter head. And he said, "Well, why isn't this on RAND letterhead?" And we said, "Well, we weren't going to involve RAND in this directly." We just said "we'd worked for the government" on it; that was essential. He said, "Oh, people are going to find out that you're from RAND. It will look as though we're hiding it." This is my friend Harry Rowen, who was now president of RAND. So he said, "Put it on RAND letterhead, anyway, we'll get some credit for having a diversity of views at RAND," you know, and being open to free speech.

He was fired, actually, a couple years later after the Pentagon Papers came out for being too close to me, essentially. And one vice president of RAND told me just recently this year, the big mistake he made, he didn't consult the trustees on that. He certainly should not have made that decision without consulting the trustees.

But anyway, we put the letter out on RAND letterhead, and that was a major point of condemnation by more than 100 members of RAND, who sent us memos, angry memos. As one put it, "You have a right to put your job on the line; you don't have a right to put my job on the line." And that we were going to lose them contract money and this and that. And I was rather shocked by the reaction, actually, because I thought we all had the good of

the country in mind, and national security. And I was shocked that all the objections were that I was hurting their income, their career. It seemed crass to me. Granted, not to say that those worries weren't real, but there was more at stake here, I thought.

One vice president at RAND told Konrad, "If one RAND secretary loses her job by a budget cut because of this letter, you had no right to send it." And again, I was shocked at that point - naïve little me. And I said, "That man should have nothing to do with national security. We're talking about trying to end a war here." Now that's terrible. It bears on your question, what about the personal relationships you're jeopardizing by this truth-telling?

Well anyway, Albert and Roberta had me to lunch afterwards, the last time I ever saw them. They were very angry and they said, "How could you do this to Harry, our mutual friend? How could you do this, the letter?"

Now keep in mind, by the way, the others were worried about their jobs. ^LIt wasn't because that same week I was copying the Pentagon papers; I didn't tell them that. So I was a little detached from the question of keeping my job, because I expected to be in jail soon. I thought they'd come out shortly. I didn't tell them that. I was very sleepy through the meetings. I'd been up all night copying the Pentagon papers. I wasn't even very active on it. People thought I had initiated the letter because we signed it alphabetically, and my name was first. I wasn't the main drafter. Actually Konrad was the main drafter, although it was my idea to send it. But he was the main drafter.

So Albert says, "How could you have done this?" He said, "How could you put that on RAND letterhead and jeopardize this company?" And I said, "Well, that was Harry's idea, don't you know that?" They didn't know that. I said, "Definitely," and I told them the whole story. "Harry told us to put it on RAND letterhead." He said, "Well, if Harry told you to pull out your cock in broad daylight on the boulevard, would you feel you had to do

it?” And I said, “That’s what this means to you, isn’t it, Albert? Sheer exhibitionism - sort of nailing my cock on the cathedral door, or something like that. It’s just an act of exhibitionism as far as you’re concerned.” And he said, “Well, yes. Yes.” And we parted, and that was the last I ever saw of them.

When he died, I was very, very shaken. Many years later, about 10 years ago, I realized that I’d always dreamed that the day would come when we could get together again and resolve that or forget that. So when I realized he died and I didn’t have a chance to do that, I was very, very distraught.

END OF SIDE A

SIDE B

A: We’ve invested time in some of these stories and they didn’t quite get finished. I was telling about the missile gap issue, when I went to SAC at one point.

Q: Well here’s what I’d like to do. I think there are some stories - inevitably you’re going to have to come back, if you’re willing. But it’s better for me to have some kind of outline of the stuff. It’ll become more obvious, when I try to edit something, what is missing and what isn’t. And we haven’t talked at all about the opening scene of your book.

A: You mean the Tonkin Gulf? Is your editor listening?

Q: No, she’s not here

A: Right. You know, by the way, my son sent me that stuff on the Cuban missile crisis yesterday on e-mail, and he kindly printed it out for me. I was looking at it last night before I went to bed, and I found the list I'd been looking for of McNamara's lies about the Cuban missile crisis, or "concealments" - lies and concealment. Concealment gives a false impression, of course, but it's probably more common than directly lying in general ways. But his misdirection about the Cuban missile crisis, I found I had 23 occasions, things that he has in all of his writings on the Cuban missile crisis, still left out, as have most people. And by the way, I think just one of those - there's one where he's not leaving something out - he probably doesn't know. It wasn't in my list, actually. But the ending of the missile crisis, I think, is possibly worth talking about.

Q: Do you have the list of 27 things?

A: I have it; I can give you the list. In fact, I told Adam to give you all the material we copied out.

Q: Is it lengthy? Do you want to read part of it?

A: No, no, it's too long.

Q: Okay.

A: But some of which is on the record by now, but much of which has never come out. Just stuff I learned in my study of the missile crisis.

Then there's the question you raised, which is very important, of what I think he was really up to. That's what he was really doing. If I could get myself just to tell that straight without telling why I believe it, get that on the record, it's the kind of thing I would love him to read,

actually, or to look at, if he doesn't read. What I think he was really trying to do, and why he was trying to do it. I could try to do that fairly briefly.

Q: Well, I would like to go to Gulf of Tonkin first.

A: Okay, we can do that.

Q: I think if you're willing, inevitably I would like you to come back.

A: All right, I tell you what: let me tell the Gulf of Tonkin, which does raise the question of lying quite a bit. And I could give you a couple of other examples also, because you raised the "did he really lie?" Something I'm really trying to get about is that the decision-makers live in a different world of information from other people in the government, but above all from the public, from the *New York Times* readers. They're looking at different problems. The considerations they're looking at are not in the paper at all, generally. The challenges they see, the crises they see, are not crises that the public is experiencing at the same time. That does not mean they're living in the world of reality, unlike these other people. Their world has just about as much untruth--

[INTERRUPTION]

A: I think their world is filled with illusion and mistakes and misinterpretations and unreality, but it's a different set of illusions than the public is living with. Another side of that is, they feel no compulsion to worry about telling the truth to the public because there's no possibility in their minds of conveying to the public what they're really worried about, what they're concerned with, what they're doing with. So they tell the public what the public "needs" to hear, so some minimum thing the public "wants" to hear or the Congress "wants" to hear. What will serve their purposes.

Truth is just barely a consideration except on the question of whether they might be caught in a clear-cut, demonstrable lie. Which is often the case that they could, but they do try to minimize that to a certain extent so they can have an out. They say, “Oh, what I really meant,” or “Maybe I didn’t make myself clear on this.” They’d rather be able to say that.

But when they have to lie, they lie. And telling the truth to the public, to someone without a clearance who is not in the inside, “not on our team,” is not among their list of virtues or obligations; it’s not a test of character.

I was saying at lunch to someone, something that is taboo inside is to suggest that something they’re doing is immoral or evil or sinful or illegal. These are taboo statements. Somebody who said any such thing would be out of the game, because they’re seen, on the one hand, as fanatic, moralistic and possibly not willing to keep silence about what we’re talking about. If they think it’s evil or illegal, they may tell. So they’re out; you can’t say that sort of thing.

But on the other hand, to accuse, to say, “Well, that’s not true” – well, of course, it’s not true. Actually, as I said, even to think that that was an important thing to say would tend to put you out of the game.

Q: What is the important thing to say, sorry?

A: To say that it’s true. “Let’s say this because it’s true,” or “That would not be true.” That would indicate somebody here who is not with it somehow, who’s worried about whether what we say it’s true or not. Now if I say, “Oh, no, if we say that, they could come up with this, or somebody might talk, or we’d be found out,” that’s worth saying.

I guess what I was trying to say was - this is another side of it - people do not want to feel or even be challenged with the notion that what they're doing might be immoral or evil or sinful or wicked, or illegal. They don't want to do something that's illegal, although they assume that the ^{Counsel of} Council or the Defense Department or the White House can take care of that. There's almost no legal restraint. That's what the lawyers are for is to get you out of any charge of illegality. But they don't want to feel they're actually breaking the law on the whole.

But in terms of feeling that they're not telling the truth, that's like breathing. There's no compulsion to tell the truth to the public, to the "unwashed," to the proles out there. No, they don't deserve truth, and they couldn't handle it. They'd be led to some stupid reaction that would be against their own interest if they were smart enough and informed enough to know it. We've got to make those decisions for them.

Q: But is this contempt for the public, or just the belief that secrecy is necessary for the operations of government?

A: The two go together.

Q: What two? You have to explain to me.

A: [Laughter] The reason you can't tell the public the truth is what I just said. They'll react in some impulsive, emotional, ideologically-led fashion, some parochial - I'm talking here more about Congress. If you tell Congress the truth, they will see some way to exploit that to their advantage, which is against the national interest. And they're not to be trusted with it; it's not for their good. We're here to make decisions for their good. And it's, to some extent, treating both the public and Congress like autistic children. It's not for their good to give them a share in the decision-making; that will not do anybody any good. If they ask for

a share, tell them what will keep them quiet, distract them, give them something else to play with. But let us make the decisions.

So there is a paternalistic aspect about it, at best, or an authoritarian. Most people in the executive branch can't honestly be called very democratic in their outlook.

Q: Misdirect them?

A: Yeah, right. Point to where you want them to look. I don't know if I made that point, but the point I was trying to make is, it's not "the hand is quicker than the eye." The essence of magic is like this: it's just a pointing finger. Let them follow the finger; that's how you fool people. I didn't tell you the coin is in this hand, I just looked at it and pointed at it. But it's not in that hand.

Q: So you were talking about contempt for the public, and lies.

A: Condescension. It's not total contempt; it's the way you feel towards your children. You love them; you want to do what's best for them. That does not involve letting them decide when to drive the car.

Q: Paternalistic, as you said?

A: Yeah.

Q: Let's go back to Gulf of Tonkin. Set up your first day.

A: Okay, my first day just learning the job - It was a coincidence that it started this way. Because I'm sitting at a desk outside - the Assistant Secretary of Defense, John T.

McNaughton, had just hired me. I wasn't officially hired yet. The Civil Service took awhile, actually, to decide to give me the highest Civil Service grade, the super-grade, GS-18. I'd asked for that, and I was starting, in other words, at the very top super-grade. And it took them several weeks to finally come through with that.

But I began working on the job on August 4th, before that was confirmed. And I didn't even have an office yet. My predecessor was still in the office. He was moving to be a Deputy Assistant Secretary, which was the normal course for a Special Assistant, to be sort of tried out in that, and then if he worked out well, to become a Deputy Assistant Secretary. He got the same pay as a Deputy Assistant Secretary. So he was moving to this Deputy Assistant Secretary, but he still had all his stuff in his old office, which was a little cubbyhole next to the Assistant Secretary.

I was sitting at a desk outside when a courier comes running into the office, which was rare - to be running - and he puts a cable on my desk, that I'd never seen anything like this. And it's a flash message. which means, I believe, that it was supposed to be delivered in some short period of time, like 10 minutes, from being sent. But I wasn't the original addressee; McNaughton was not the original addressee. It was for the Secretary of Defense and for the President; I was getting a copy. So it was well more than 10 minutes after it had been sent.

But it was from Captain Herrick, who was commanding a destroyer in the South China Sea in the Tonkin Gulf off the coast of North Vietnam. And he said - I think this first one, actually - that he was under attack. There had been some earlier cables that I hadn't seen that said he was expecting an attack. There were indications of an ambush. The radar had picked up PT boats cruising at some 10,000 yards or something, fairly far away, looking as though they were getting ready to ambush the destroyer, which was in darkness. A moonless night in the Tonkin Gulf, 12 hours distant, 12 time zones distant from Washington.

So these cables started coming in at about 7:00 a.m. Washington time; 7:00 p.m. in the Tonkin Gulf before, earlier. And then this first cable I saw actually was a couple hours after that, and it said, "Am under torpedo attack. Torpedo has just passed our ship," and so forth.

Now there had been cables like that that I had already seen the day before. I say I started in that morning, but the previous afternoon I had begun reading the cables. This was a Tuesday that I was on the job. But on Monday afternoon, I was reading cables from Sunday. Sorry if I confuse you with all this.

But on Sunday during the daytime, two torpedo boats, maybe three, had actually attacked the same destroyer in the Tonkin Gulf during daylight, and had fired four torpedoes, which were clearly seen by the men on deck. They saw them launch, they saw the wake as they went by. The boats were also firing what amounted to 50 caliber - they might have been 9 millimeter or something - bullets at the ship. And the ship returned fire, actually fired first, strictly speaking, as the boats came at them. Then they fired their torpedoes.

The torpedoes all missed. They felt they'd damaged several of the boats, and chased after them to some extent with planes from a carrier. The boats ran away. So all this had happened on Sunday. That was the first attack on an American warship since the Second World War. I don't think there was any comparable attack during the Korean War. So here we are in 1964, 19 years after World War II and an American warship was under attack on Sunday. The U.S. got that word, then, late Saturday night our time. The President got it Sunday morning in Washington, and chose not to respond, not to do anything for a number of reasons, which I could come back to.

Now two days have passed. He, among other things, had warned North Vietnam - and this was all public - that if anything like that happened again, we would take appropriate action. Meanwhile, he had doubled the destroyer patrol. There were now two destroyers off the

course of North Vietnam, and he sent another carrier. I'm getting vague on this now, but I think there were three in all by this time; he had added another carrier in the vicinity. So he'd strengthened the patrol and we were continuing these patrols in international waters, supposedly in case there was another provocation.

Okay, I get this message then of the torpedo. I don't give it to McNaughton because McNaughton has already gone to the Secretary of Defense's office to confer with him and the Joint Chiefs on what would be the appropriate response if there is an attack. And they were getting these cables faster than I was, by minutes, and the attack was now on.

Within 10 minutes or so later, he runs in with another cable. A second torpedo, a third torpedo, and cables kept coming. A very unusual scene here because apparently Captain Herrick said he's taking evasive action in the face of this attack, which for him was in black night. Not just nighttime, but a starless night, overcast, no light at all, and he's weaving around. Both the Turner Joy and the Maddox, these two, were taking evasive action and firing on the boats that were attacking them in.

Word comes in, "We believe we have damaged one boat. Disappeared off the radar scope. More torpedoes, six torpedoes, nine torpedoes." He's apparently dictating these from the bridge of the Maddox as he's taking the evasive action.

So it's like watching the thing in real time. It was all taking place, like CNN. There was no CNN then, no live coverage of the Western Pacific, but we were getting these in the same time intervals as he was sending them, with a delay of - I've forgotten, I have it in my book, I checked the time. But the delay might have been 40 minutes or something. But we're getting them as if they were happening right at that minute, so it was very dramatic.

McNaughton doesn't come back because in the face of this attack we get the word that the President has decided to respond. Targets have been chosen, and the Ticonderoga and the other carrier are to launch planes at first light as soon as they're in position off the coast of North Vietnam, within range. This all started about 9:40, I believe. At 1:30 Washington time, another cable comes in from Herrick after 21 torpedoes had been announced. A huge number, the sea is just laced with torpedoes, it seemed. And the cable comes in that in effect says, "Hold everything, stop. All accounts of torpedoes after the first are suspect." And I'm combining a couple of cables that came. The message was, "An overeager sonar man may have mistaken the beat of the ship's propeller against our wake as we take evasive action," as incoming torpedoes. And it may be that none of these torpedoes after the first were really correct on the report.

That of course changed the adrenalin level here very quickly. I think that somebody who was with me at that time reports - and told an interviewer - that his memory of my reaction was, "Oh, this is it, let's get 'em! They can't do this again, hitting an American warship. We've got to respond and retaliate." I actually don't remember that, but it's perfectly plausible; it's logically the way I would have reacted at that time to these reports.

But I'll never forget that new cable coming in, and then other cables which seemed to confirm it. "More problems with the reports earlier," Herrick says, "Recommend no action be taken till a chance for daylight reconnaissance." Looking for wreckage because they thought they'd destroyed at least three boats, disappearing from their radar. And there should be wreckage or oil slicks from the boats that will show up in the daylight, or perhaps crew members bobbing around with life jackets. He said, "Don't do anything till we've had a chance for daylight reconnaissance." Now this is 1:30 in the morning in the Tonkin Gulf, so that means five or six hours away. "Don't do anything till then."

Actually, they did do daylight reconnaissance before the strikes went off because the strikes didn't get off till 10:00 or 11:00 in the morning in the Tonkin Gulf. So they did a reconnaissance, and they didn't find anything. Also I knew within 24 hours that the pilots from the Ticonderoga, led by a man who was later Perot's vice presidential candidate, Stockdale - a lieutenant commander at the time; later a prisoner for a very long time. And Stockdale had flown, as he put it, "on the deck" just above the choppy waves, back and forth for much of the night, and was certain he would have seen at least the wakes of torpedo boats or firing.

Q: North Vietnamese torpedoes?

A: North Vietnamese. And He had seen nothing. He was certain there was nothing there, so he so reported. I don't think I got that, that night, but the next day we got the reports. Yeah, the pilots report no visual sightings of anything.

Other people did think they had seen things, however. One of them, a Marine, thought he saw pilot lights going by. As Commander Ulysses S. Grant Sharp said later - and he repeated it to me once when I talked to him a few years ago- "A Marine on board ship can see just about anything." I'd been a Marine on ship for six months, actually. The idea being that you're not used to unusual sights, phosphorescence and wave effects and various things at night. Marines imagine things but there were reports, various kinds.

Q: Well, we all imagine things.

A: Yeah, right. So Herrick did remain convinced that there had been an ambush intended, and that there had been an attack with at least one torpedo. He maintained that for about 20 years until he was shown counterevidence by Bob ^{Scheer} Shearer: the ship's log. I could go into that, but he shows him evidence that he was wrong on his assumptions about that first torpedo.

But for 20 years or so he maintained the notion that there had been one torpedo, he was sure of it. That meant there had been an attack. On the other hand, his statement of being quite certain of that had to be taken with a grain of salt, because he'd been just as certain about the previous 20 torpedoes. So there was no question of being sure of it at this point. It was obvious that it was a gamble, it was a question. It was very ambiguous, if I may use that phrase, in a real sense. The evidence was very contradictory.

I used that as the definition of ambiguity earlier: "contradictory evidence and slight evidence." Well here was a situation where all the sonar reports were from one ship, I believe the Maddox, and all the radar reports were from the other ship, the Turner Joy. The Turner Joy could not pick up any sonar readings on this, and the Maddox could not pick up any radar reports.

There was also another aspect that was known quite early, and that was a very peculiar one. I actually met a guy recently, within this year, who told me that he had been on a listening post, a communications intelligence post, in Okinawa on the night of August fourth, 1964. He said, "We knew right away that there was no attack." And I said, "Let me guess," because I knew part of this. I said, "No ELINT." There was no ^{COMINT} ~~comment~~ or ELINT, no electronic intelligence from the boats; and no radar signals coming from the boats; no communications to or from the PT boats.

Now if there was an attack far out at sea as this was happening, it was impossible that those boats could have found one of the destroyers without using radar, or without being guided to that without communications from the shore, and those communications would have been intercepted by intercepting boats. So the fact that there was no signals to the boats, or from one boat to another, or any use of radar by the ships, which had to be detected. There couldn't be anything there. They couldn't find the ships. They couldn't maneuver for a couple of hours as supposedly they were doing under those situations.

He said, "Yeah, you're right. We knew there was no attack. We heard all this communication." He said, "There was no attack."

We knew some of that, that very night and more came in later. But as I say, there was still sightings, there was this-and-that. This was not without some contradictory evidence that there was an attack. I believed by that evening that there probably had been an attack. And in the words of my thesis, without being ambiguous about it, I might have said "it's 6:5 that there was an attack." Or 3:2, that there was an attack. To put it higher than that in terms of odds, there was no basis for it in the evidence.

By the next day, or days later, I would have said, "Well, there might have been an attack with stuff coming in, but now it's down to 1 out of 3, or 1 out of 5, within a day or two. Nevertheless, I am sure that McNamara and Johnson, in replying that night, believed there had been an attack. With certainty? I don't know, maybe they managed to tell themselves they were certain. But McNamara had actually asked CINCPAC and Sharp earlier: "Is there any chance that there was no attack?" And Sharp said, "Yes, that's possible." Later Sharp said - and I heard him say it to me, some years ago, as I say - "There was no attack." But that night, he thought there was probably an attack.

The President just said, "We have been attacked." McNamara said, "There was unequivocal evidence of an unprovoked attack on our destroyers on routine patrol in international waters. We are in the process of responding in a measured and fitting way, a limited way, against the bases from which these boats came. We seek no wider war." Five statements there as I count them. Within a day or two, and to a large extent, that very night, I knew that each one of those five statements was false, consciously false. "Unequivocal"? It couldn't have been more equivocal. It wasn't certain there'd been no attack, but to call it unequivocal was absurd.

“Unprovoked?” Flatly wrong. The reason that we hadn’t responded on August 2nd in the daylight attack that did occur, that we knew occurred, was that that very night before, we had covertly attacked the coast of North Vietnam with CIA patrol boats that the U.S. totally controlled. We knew from their communications that we were intercepting, that they believed that the destroyers on this patrol were associated with those patrol boats, part of the same operation. And they were right. It wasn’t just that that was plausible, they were right: they were associated.

Q: Associated with these attacks?

A: With the attacks. So they thought they were responding against ships that were part of an attack on their coastline, which was true. Not against the PT boats that attacked them, but against the destroyers that were in effect accompanying those patrol boats. Among other things, the destroyers wanted to pick up any communications from the radars from the shore, which they didn’t normally turn on lest they give away their position. The destroyers then were taking advantage of the fact that the attacks by the patrol boats would force the North Vietnamese to turn on their shore radars, which enabled the destroyers to plot those radars, in readiness for the invasion that the Navy had wanted to carry out for some time, and was hoping to do within months. So they were plotting shore batteries in preparation for an invasion.

“Routine patrol?” These were intelligence patrol ships with special equipment for intercepting communications and radar, which were not just picking up intercepts, they were trying - as in the way I just described - to provoke communications and intercepts from the shore, and in part did that by deliberately running towards shore in what occasionally appeared to be an attack mode, and then pulling back. Feints to get them to turn on their radars so we could later destroy them when we wanted to invade - very provocative actions.

“International waters?” Yes, they were in international waters when they were hit on Sunday, the second, and later when they thought they were being attacked on August 4th. But that was because they’d come out from shore when they thought they were being attacked. Previously, when the attack was being ordered on the second, they were within what North Vietnam claimed as its territorial waters. They claimed a 12-mile limit, like other Communist nations. We didn’t go anywhere near that in China. We were deliberately going at least within 11 miles to challenge that, and actually these destroyers’ logs suggested that at various times, they’d been within five or six miles. So they were well within what they claimed as territorial waters.

Q: In order to provoke them?

A: In order to provoke them. And that was true on the second. We have the transcript. When Johnson asked his advisors why they thought the attack had occurred on the second, when it did occur, John McCone, the Republican head of Central Intelligence said, “They’re taking defensive action against our 34-A operations, against our covert action. They’re responding to them.” If that was true on August 2nd, which it obviously was, it was also true on the fourth if there was an attack, because we had also attacked on the night of August 3rd and 4th. Johnson knew that; he had personally authorized that attack on August 2nd at a time when we’d just provoked an attack on a destroyer. He sent the PT boats back two nights later. He doubles the patrol, he sent them back there. There’s very little doubt that the intention now is to provoke another attack.

Thus, hoping for an attack, they were pretty quick to imagine that what they’d hoped for was happening again. And I think you said earlier, “Believing is seeing.” Wishing to believe is seeing, and they wished to believe they were under attack. By the way, McNamara is blowing smoke when he says, “We now knew this was a deliberate attack, so we *had* to respond.”

They wanted an attack, there's no question about that. And they saw what they wanted, and they responded to what they saw.

Q: They provoked a second attack?

A: Yes, they did.

Q: And in fact, it was-

A: That's not the last time, either.

Q: Given your analysis of this sort of thing, doesn't the fact that they knew, they had 100% certainty that they had provoked a second attack. Didn't that give them more reason to believe?

A: That's what I just said, yeah. That's what I'm saying: knowing that they wanted to provoke an attack and they were trying to provoke an attack, it was very easy for them to interpret ambiguous signals. Actually, they weren't so ambiguous to begin with. But to interpret finally an ambiguous picture to say, "It's plausible that we are being attacked because we've been doing everything we can to get attacked. So it's natural to assume we are being attacked."

Now others looked at that. Intelligence analysts like Alan Whiting at INR, Intelligence and Research in State, was following the same thing over in the State Department. And he's an old RAND colleague, actually, and he later was sort of a chief Chinese intelligence person. And he didn't say this to me; it's in several books. He said, "I was certain that night there was no attack. Sixty miles out at sea, in the middle of the Gulf of Tonkin, they would take on an American destroyer?" He said, "That was insane." In other words, they couldn't find it.

So he said, "Knowing that we were behaving as if we believed there was an attack," Whiting immediately began to work thinking"- which is his job - "how will they respond to being attacked for an attack, a North Vietnamese attack, that they know didn't happen, and that they must assume the U.S. knew did not happen?"

So he immediately put out a report saying, "You better start guarding the planes at Bien Hoa air base, because their response to this attack on them, which ^{they} ~~we~~ will take as a deliberate escalation, is going to be to attack our planes." But the Air Force was never big on preventing planes and putting planes behind bunkers. That was not their concept of what an airplane did. And RAND for years had tried to get SAC to build concrete walls around their B-52s so that they would survive a near-miss, and you just couldn't get them to do it. Getting them off the ground into the air, into an airborne alert: that was what an airplane did. Sitting there behind sandbags or concrete was not what you did with an airplane. You couldn't get them to do it.

So in Bien Hoa in November, they blew up a huge number of our planes on Bien Hoa airbase. They just went onto the base and blew them up with mines in a response to this. But he saw right away: No attack; now where do we go from there? As I said, "unprovoked," then? If there was an attack, it's absurd to say that it was unprovoked. And our own assumptions were - inside - that we had provoked it. I said, "international waters." That was very misleading. We hadn't been in international waters earlier.

"No wider war"? This is the big one. A month earlier, two months, in June we had sent the Canadian ICC commissioner, International Control Commission Commissioner, Seaborn, to Hanoi to convey direct threats, warnings, from the President of the United States that if he didn't - and it didn't have to do with "don't attack our ships." If he did not stop what he was doing, supporting the insurgency in the South - if he did not in effect call off the insurgency in the South - we would devastate north Vietnam.

Q: Devastate?

A: Devastate. You know, “you will suffer great devastation.” I don’t think that was meant to be heard at that time as a nuclear threat, but as a threat of heavy air attack, what he would get. And Pham Van Dong did not order him out of the room. He talked to him very calmly in effect saying, “The willingness of our people to carry on this fight is beyond our own comprehension. We will not give up on this.” He asked for further conferences with Seaborn. He accepted these threats rather calmly and very resolutely. As Seaborn said, “No, he didn’t seem in any way phased by them, and he wasn’t unwilling to discuss it. But he understood that he was getting a direct threat, an ultimatum, in effect.”

After the Tonkin Gulf firing, Seaborn went back again with instructions written by my boss, which I helped him on in some minor, Turk-like way. He showed them to me on wording and they were, “Now you understand what we meant with our warning in July. We repeat: to carry on this war,” effectively, “you will suffer very greatly in your homeland.” So the idea was that Tonkin Gulf was meant, was shown to be, a warning. It was not known to Congress that these warnings had been delivered, not known to our public. Very secret. Not from North Vietnam or Russia; the warnings were to them. So they knew the policy of our government much better than the voters did in the election campaign of ’64.

Goldwater was calling for that expansion of the war very openly. The President was saying over and over, a mantra, “We seek no wider war,” in contrast to Goldwater, who was planning, promising to widen the war. Johnson was secretly - with the help of my boss, McNaughton. I had just gotten in the office; I wasn’t much of a participant in that, that week. He was secretly telling Pham Van Dong, “We’re going to carry out the Goldwater policy when we’re elected again, unless you stop the war.” Which Pham Van Dong, the Prime Minister, was telling him over and over that, “That’s not going to happen, we’re not stopping.” And it was clear in

retrospect that it was that month that they started the process of sending North Vietnamese troops, for the first time as units, directly into South Vietnam. They foresaw not only bombing, but ground troops. They were sure that it wouldn't be only bombing, and they were right.

And the troops, then, which began to get in - it took them about six months, in many cases, to come down the trail through Laos, to get ready, come down, come into South Vietnam. That clearly started roughly in the fall of 1964. It was the result of the Tonkin Gulf. In other words, our threats had warned them directly. And since they didn't give up, it stimulated them to take countermeasures. They saw they were now going to face U.S. troops as well as bombing, and they set out. They began evacuating their cities and building their air defenses and doing various things, getting ready for something that they knew was coming.

But the American people didn't know it was coming because they thought they were voting against that by voting for Johnson in unprecedented numbers. On the day of the election - and it was November 3rd, 1964 - I didn't vote because I was in the State Department with John McNaughton in an interagency group, directed to essentially, effectively, determining alternative ways to carry out Goldwater's policy. Ranging from the pure Goldwater form, which was the same as the Joint Chiefs of Staff form - he was speaking for them, essentially - to lesser, modified ways of attacking North Vietnam. The option of not attacking at all was considered, but that was a straw man to measure these other things. So it's obvious: that's the way of losing; it's out of the question. But for form of completeness, we allow that. But the other ways are how to carry out Goldwater's policy.

And we were working on that on the day that the voters were casting an unprecedented, landslide vote against widening the war, for the man that they had heard, again and again, say, "We seek no wider war." So that was the big lie.

Q: The big lie?

A: But it was accompanied, as I say, by a lot of lesser lies. McNamara lied and Rusk lied. For example, McNamara to this day is still lying on a number of points. He seems very sensitive about Tonkin Gulf for understandable reasons, I suppose. But given that he's very candid about some things - not much actually, but he is on some things. Tonkin Gulf, he doesn't come close to being candid on that one. To me, it shows a sort of understandable sensitivity.

For instance, in 1995, in retrospect, and to this day, he says what he said in secret session to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on August 5th, 1964: "These are Vietnamese boats, South Vietnamese boats were attacking North Vietnam." He didn't tell that to the public. In top-secret session, he told it to the Senate: "Yes, there were South Vietnamese boats."

That was a lie, a flat lie, and he knew it. The boats had nothing to do with South Vietnam. They were Norwegian boats, bought by CIA, manned by in part Norwegian skippers, other skippers, some American skippers, various others, with crews hired by CIA from various parts of the Far East and even from Cuba. Cuban assets, Thais, Chinese nationalists, a few South Vietnamese who were recruited for pay from the South Vietnamese Navy. The operations were totally planned by MAC-SOG, Special Operations Group and MACV and CIA. Timing controlled targets picked entirely by the U.S.

Q: We're out of tape.

Q: The question is, I need your personal story in all this. I'd like to know what your office looked like, where it was.

A: Yeah, well. Right. As I say, in this particular time, I was sitting in a desk in a hall. I mean, not an outside hall, but a little passageway inside International Security Affairs. Secretaries here, secretaries there. The Assistant Secretary's office - a large, big, huge, high-ceilinged office. A little further off there. And then there's a passageway with the precursor to a Xerox machine. I forget what they called it. It wasn't Xerox. And a couple of little cubbyholes for the military attaché and his assistant, and then my little special assistant's office, which was a tiny cubbyhole, probably had been a closet at some point. But its merit was it was the closest office to McNaughton's, and I could go into McNaughton's unless there he had a red light flash over his door. And if the red light was on, nobody was to disturb him. But if the red light wasn't on, I could go into his office any time, look at his desk, go through stuff, generally.

But I wasn't in that little cubbyhole yet. I was just at a temporary desk on the day of August 4th. But as I'm saying, within 24 hours or 30 hours, I knew that all of the allegations being made by the White House, and by McNamara - and I was reading McNamara's Top Secret testimony, because they would send transcripts over for us to look at and see if stuff we wanted to keep out if it were ever declassified. Normally, you wouldn't see that, an outsider wouldn't see that for months, if ever, but we saw it the day after.

So I knew he was lying like mad to the Senate.

Q: You also talk about these big stacks of paper.

A: Well, that was really a day or two later, when I moved into that office. I told the military assistant, Colonel Rogers, that I wanted to see all the traffic on Vietnam. Because I was supposed to tell McNaughton, be a major filter for him, and tell him what on Vietnam - that was my function - he ought to read. So I said, "Show me everything, so I can look at it all." He said "Everything? Really, everything on Vietnam?" I said, "Yes, on Vietnam."

So the next day I came in early in the morning, got there at 8:00. I was supposed to get there at 8:00 and I normally got there at 8:10. That's some problem I have of being 10 minutes late. But every year, every day for a year, I was, seven days a week, essentially, I would get in about 8:10. And there were two piles of paper, each about five and half, six feet high. I'm 5'10". Sometimes they were a little over my head. Sometimes a little under my head. Two piles. So there were 11 or 12 feet of paper looking at me. What's this? So I would take a bunch of it, put it on my desk, and start to rifle through it.

Well, they were everything: logistics reports; weekly reports from every kind of unit coming into the Pentagon; intelligence reports; cables going in, going out, from the field. They operated in those days, and still, largely, on what amounted to teletype, on cables. I should say telegrams. Long telegrams. And some were just very routine and personnel assignments and things like that.

But sometimes they were like weekly reports from the Ambassador, and fairly interesting, meaty kinds of things I would try to winnow out of that stack. But to do that, what I might want to look at, and then a much smaller pile that I thought McNaughton ought to spend his time on, and what I would put in my safe.

Well, you know, out of 12 feet of paper, I finally, to get through with that, I had to rifle as fast as I could. It was like when I'd been back in the car plant - I worked at the Dodge plant in Hamtramck on a punch press. And you were supposed to turn out 1200 pieces in an hour, or something just like Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*. A pair of tongs. Putting stuff under a punch press, taking it out again. You had to do it, synchronize your movements.

And I was practically doing that with this paper, slapping it down, looking at it. And if I didn't want it, it goes into a huge burn bag. This is a paper bag, like a gunny sack, folded

over a bit, very stiff, brown paper. Very large. About four feet high. And there would be two of them. And I'd throw this stuff into the burn bag. Secret, Confidential, Top Secret. If I didn't want it, it would go down to be shredded and burned, and then I would keep some of this to show him.

Well, I went through that. It would take me all day. I was spending 12 hour days normally. I rarely got out before 8:00 o'clock at night. And after a couple of days, I said, "Okay, I get the point here, I guess I don't want everything." He had to come to me. So I said, "let's limit it to Top Secret, Secret Lim Dis, limited distribution, specialized, or No Dis, no distribution." Now no distribution means nobody gets it except the addressee. Well, I wasn't the addressee, but, you know, cuts down the number of copies, as I said earlier.

So I would limit it, and now I would get, say, four-foot piles, or three-foot piles to go through. It was still a day's work. In other words, as Alain Enthoven used to say, "It's like drinking from a fire hose." You're inundated by this information of all kinds and you get very, very tired. You're working at a very, very high pace all the time. Crises are every day, of some sort. And one effect of that, by the way, is to insulate you from ethical or moral concerns about what you're doing. Because what you're doing seems so hard and so fast, and to require so much of you, which is stimulating and up to a point, but exhausting. I think everybody in that position is thinking, "I'm doing my best, and I'm almost surely doing better than somebody else would do on this job. So, sue me, if I make a mistake, or if I'm not doing the right thing, you try to do it. You know, you would do worse."

And if somebody else were in this job, you know, they don't understand how hard this is, sort of like a mother's attitude with six-month-old twins, or something. I'll say, "Don't tell me that I'm not doing a perfect job here. I know I'm not doing a perfect job, but I'm doing my best and I'm working very hard." And I think, one administration to the next - some may be

more competent than others. But none of them are very vulnerable to criticism from others, because they feel they're under the gun.

Q: So, your feelings at the time. You say you know all of these things were lies.

A: Yeah.

Q: Like, "no wider war." No "provocation." Did you know that at the time, really?

A: Oh, yeah, definitely. But people have asked me--

Q: Well, talk about that.

A: How could you stay in a job when you knew they were lying all the time? I was new as a full-time employee, and that did open my eyes to the degree of lying. There was more of it than even I had known. But it was not new to me at all that the government lied. Lied to each other, lied to other countries, lied to the public. I had been working as a consultant by that time, for six years, or, strictly speaking, about five years. Putting aside my first summer at RAND. But after that I was consulting for the government from '59 on. I'd seen lying on the most important of subjects, all the time. And I also knew a lot of the rationale for the lying. Take these, right now.

The President was confronting a rival, Goldwater, who is stumping for the most dangerous of all possible ways to attack Vietnam. He was even willing to use nuclear weapons in Vietnam. I didn't know that earlier that same year, I read in the Pentagon Papers later, McNamara had discussed the possible use of nuclear weapons with General Wheeler. I'm sure that did not mean McNamara would use them or would ever have agreed to using them. But he wasn't

X

This is McG B's point:
But it is, at least, to pretend to discuss (without specifics) prof. colleagues that (even, to ask for studies and convincing you are seriously considering. 259) is not (to consider seriously. And, why? and what are the consequences?

about to show that to the General, either. And he did take part in a discussion of the possible use of nuclear weapons earlier that year.

I think if I'd known that, that would have given me a great deal of pause about being in that job. That they would even imagine or discuss the possibility of using nuclear weapons in this insurgency situation. But I didn't know that. As it was, Johnson was fighting a man who was openly proposing to use nuclear weapons. It was going to improve his chances of election, or his mandate, the greater he beat him in that. And I was certain - and this was true - that McNamara had no affinity for that approach at all, and everything that came back to me confirmed that. He did not believe in that kind of annihilation of North Vietnam or that approach. McNaughton didn't, or he wouldn't have been working for him, I was sure.

And it seemed the President was even more skeptical of the bombing idea than McNamara. That gave me quite a good impression of the President. Almost more than McNamara at that point. I heard John would be sitting in meetings at the White House. He'd come back and he'd debrief me, John McNaughton, at great length. And he would say, the President would look at McNamara and say, "Your bombing bullshit," you know, "won't work. I don't like it." You know, "What's it for?" Sounds good. I don't know what - I wonder what McNamara's real answer to that is. But it made the President sound good to me. In retrospect, I was somewhat misled. That meant to me he was skeptical of escalation, because that was the only thing that McNamara was pushing for.

What we now know is the President was quite open to the idea of ground troops, and had been for some time. Bill Moyers told Carl Kazen, the deputy to McGeorge Bundy, at one point - Kazen says he asked Moyers, "When did it become inevitable that we would send ground troops?"

Now, in the Pentagon with McNamara, that came as something of a surprise to me in the spring of '65. We'd hardly discussed it. Only the bombing. But Moyers said to Kazen, that it became inevitable on November 22, 1963. He said, "When Johnson became President the only question was when we did it." And Johnson had believed that, essentially, since '61, when he went over to Vietnam.

John Kennedy - I was told by Bobby Kennedy - I believe, was as dead set as he could be against using ground combat troops in Vietnam. He thought that would set us on the road of the French, totally, and we would lose. And I could believe he believed that. It was true. And he had seen the French effort, unlike most of his colleagues, and he understood that we could lose like the French, which most Americans couldn't even imagine. But Kennedy was willing to imagine.


Q: Somewhat prescient on his part.


A: Yeah, it was, but I asked Bobby once, as is in my book, when I first really met him - well, I met him in '64, but in '67 he told me the President was determined not to send ground combat troops. And he said, I don't know what he would have done in the event, you know, a year or two away. But I know what he intended to do, and he was determined not to send ground combat units. And I knew that he had had those units recommended to him by McNamara and others, virtually everyone else, in '61. And he rejected them. He sent only advisers, who are much less likely to suffer casualties. So they weren't as much of a commitment. So I could believe that was his intention, not to send ground combat units.

So I said to Bobby, rather impudently, "What made him so smart?" And he said,

Q: Sorry? What did you say?

A: I said to Bobby Kennedy, "What made him so smart?" And he said - there was whap on the table and I jumped a little bit, and he hit the table again. And he said, "Because we were there! We were there in 1951," I believe it was. "We were there and we saw what happened to the French. And he was determined"- my brother was determined - "not to let that happen to us."

And I said, soberly then, "Would he have been prepared to lose Saigon? To see Saigon go Communist?" Because that's the test. And Bobby said, "We would have fuzzed it up. We would have tried for a Laotian type of solution." And I knew what that meant. And he went on, he said, "A coalition government, an international conference, so we'd have other people making this deal, making this arrangement - not just us. You'd have a coalition government," which is what the war was about, to a large extent.

The Viet Cong, the NLF, never did demand a dominating role in the government, though that was undoubtedly what they wanted and foresaw getting. But what they asked for was that they be represented in the government of Saigon. They said, as Madame Binh said later, "We don't represent a majority of people, but we represent a very large number of people, and we should be a part of the government."

Everybody believed that, with their dedication and their competence, and their charisma from having defeated the French, and perhaps us, later, that they would eventually, before long, take over the government and be dominant. And it would not be Democratic thereafter. Everybody assumed that, very reasonably. But that isn't actually what they were asking, they were just saying, let a democratic or a representative process take place, and give us a role.

We were determined not to let that happen. The war was doomed, clearly doomed, to continue until that happened. They were never going to give up until they at least had a representative role in the government in the South. We were determined not to let them have

that. And, actually, we prevented it - for 30 years. We supported the French, who had promised elections as early as '46. We supported them fully in their determination not to let those elections take place.

Again, the Geneva International Conference promised the Communists elections under UN supervision. They promised that in '54 that it would take place no later than '56. Eisenhower was determined not to let those elections take place, because, as he said, by '54 at least, 80% of the people would have voted for Ho Chi Minh. Maybe less later, but enough, we were never willing to allow Democratic elections to take place because they would have elected the wrong government.

Even if the Communists didn't get in, in the first place, elections would have mainly elected people, representatively, who were not anti-Communist. Who were not like Diem and his Catholics, prepared to fight a war to keep Communists from being part of the government of Saigon. They weren't prepared to hunt down Communists, torture them, kill them, and Diem did. They would have let Communists compete politically.

And that, we saw, would result - because it was between the Communist-led forces by that time, and collaborators. And the collaborators had nothing to recommend them - no unity, no dedication, no nothing. They were no competition for the Communists. So the Communists would have taken over.

Q: But you called yourself, you said you were a Cold Warrior at this time.

A: Yes, and it seemed to me that to prevent Communist rule was good for these people, even if they weren't aware that it was good for them. That was my mindset at the time, just as I'm sure it's the mindset of a lot of people in Iraq right now. We know better. I was a Cold Warrior, but another of saying that, which I didn't see at the time was: I was a servant of the

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Empire. I was prepared to see the U.S. decide what was good for Vietnam, to change Vietnam's regimes when we chose to do it. Like overthrowing Diem. To decide who would be the police chief in Vietnam, which is sort of what the war was about, the police chief in Saigon. For us to decide. We had a worldwide perspective. If Vietnamese peasants didn't understand that Communist rule would not mean land reform, it would not mean land ownership; it would mean collective farms; it would mean a totalitarian rule. These illiterate peasants, perhaps, didn't understand that. We knew that. It was for us to decide what was good for them.

That was an imperial mindset, but it was shared by literally everyone I know, including the press. Everyone I knew. There were radicals in the U.S., and some young people, in SDS or something, who opposed that. But, by and large, the media, the reporters out there, and all of the officials shared the notion. We weren't perfect, but we could decide better than the Vietnamese what was good for them.

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Q: When you say you were a Cold Warrior, what do you mean by that?

A: I regarded these Stalinist regimes in various parts of the world as anathema, as terrible form of government, totalitarian, brutal, dictatorial, with no civil liberties. That was true, that wasn't an illusion. And I accepted the idea that it was a good thing to do to support people who were resisting that, and to the extent I saw, it was my impression, that there were Vietnamese who would accept our help in resisting the extension of Communist rule, I thought, good. That's a good role for us. And if we're preventing Communist expansion, that's perfectly legitimate. I hardly questioned that, and I scarcely knew anyone who did question it, including in the press.

Q: Now, the story about how like McNaughton may have suspected you for reading stuff from his safe. Tell me about that.

A: McNaughton, it seemed to me, by the way, was the one official I can remember, that was not clearly identified as a Cold Warrior in the way I knew. In retrospect, there were probably a few others in the State Department, maybe Chester Bowles. Maybe Kenneth Galbraith, to some extent, as Ambassador, who weren't fully within this Cold War crusading framework that I describe. But McNaughton was the only one I met, and he just didn't seem to believe in it. He didn't think that it did matter that much to us who ruled Vietnam. He didn't have any sympathy for Communists at all, for Communist rule. He didn't think it was our business to decide who ran South Vietnam, that we should kill people or die, should send Americans to die. Just didn't think we had that big an interest.

And I was kind of amazed by that. I didn't think we had an indefinite, ¹/₂ large interest. I believed, by the way, that we should not be in South Vietnam because it was very unpromising. From a trip there in '61, I already believed we weren't going to be successful there. It wasn't a question that I felt we didn't have a right at that point. I did come to see that later. But at the time, I already thought we should, we'd be better off out of there because we aren't going to win.

The Communists were too deeply rooted in the people from their struggle against the French to be defeated by us. I didn't see that, by the way, at the time as challenging our right to fight them. You know, they had a right to win. But Communists don't have a right to rule, whatever they did against the French. They are precursors of a police state. ¹/₁

Q: But the story about McNaughton?

A: So with McNaughton, then, I saw my views on Vietnam as being essentially the same, except that, if anything, he was more dovish than I was. He wanted less to escalate than I did. I had the right to see anything on his desk relating to Vietnam, and we didn't make a big

deal. I didn't have time to read other stuff. So I put a lot of it on his desk, actually, that's how it got there. But I was allowed to pretty much go through his office, when he was there, in particular. And at night I had access to his safe, which was actually a room, a large vault, in effect, built, closet-like affair, with doors in front that were locked with a combination lock. And I had the combination to that lock and I could go into that safe at night when I worked late, as I often did.

He had one rolling set of shelves on rollers where he would keep particular books that he was referring to next to his desk as he worked. And things he had to refer to. And there were one or two large black folders, binders, loose-leaf binders, where he said, "Don't look into those. That's for me alone." And for some time I kept that, even for months or something, I just didn't look. I'd go in at night but I didn't look at it.

In the spring of '65, the direction we were going - I'd been nine months into his work. In the spring of '65, we were moving toward an indefinite commitment of troops in Vietnam. We had 40,000 troops, we were bombing heavily, we were going toward 60,000, 70,000, and there was talk in the wind of hundreds of thousands going. There came a time when I wanted to know what was happening at the highest levels on this. And I presumed that was in the folders he didn't want me to look at. He hadn't implied there was anything personal. If it was, I would not have looked. If I saw that it was personal stuff, I would not have looked at that.

But one night, then, with this drawer there, I opened the forbidden book. The folder. And I could see at a glance, now, that this was stuff that I was not seeing during the day, and I thought I was seeing virtually everything that was coming past his desk. For one thing, the White House deliberately used a different IBM typeface from the typeface we used in the Pentagon. That was deliberate, so you could see what was from the White House. And I occasionally saw things from the White House but not very often.

Here was a whole lot of stuff from McGeorge Bundy in the White House type.

Q: White House stuff.

A: Yes. Oval office type material. Or McGeorge Bundy, NSC material, which I actually didn't see very much of. So here were reports and questions and things from McGeorge Bundy, himself. By the way, none of this was in the Pentagon Papers. Mainly, this was '65. In '67, McNaughton was dead and the Pentagon Papers project inherited nearly all of his files. That was the core of our research. The McNaughton files, which were very voluminous on the war.

Q: How did he die?

A: He died in a private, a crash of a private plane into a commercial airliner, on his way back with his family from a vacation. And I was actually sitting in his office. I had just come back from Vietnam, waiting for him in the afternoon, when the word came in that he had been killed. So that was two years later.

But now in '67, later that year, they'd already set up the Pentagon Papers project, which was continued under his successor, Paul Warnke. And they had, in principle, all his files. But in retrospect, now that I know what's available from the White House, I realized none of these memos got into the Pentagon Papers. Clearly those notebooks must have been sent back to the White House, or somewhere where we didn't get them with no word to us that there was censorship here. Because the memos from George Ball and memos from McGeorge Bundy questioning McNamara's recommendations were not in the Pentagon Papers. They came out later from McGeorge Bundy's files, when people finally got at those.

So I realized that later, years later, 10 years later, when those files became available, I realized from that period, that's what I was looking at that night. These were George Ball memos saying "We should get out, we must cut our losses. This was wrong." McGeorge Bundy saying to McNamara in a July 1st, 1965, "Your proposals for expanding the 100,000 troops" that I told about earlier - "Your proposals seem to me rash to the point of folly." This was not bureaucratic language. In fact, I never saw one official write to another with terms like that. "Rash to the point of folly." "I don't quite agree," or "I see some problems with your proposals." But to say, "your proposals are rash to the point of folly," and then he went detail by detail with amazingly prescient criticisms. "If we put these troops, what reason is there to believe that the North Vietnamese will not match them," you know, to counter. "Why should we think that American troops can succeed in the jungles there, catching insurgents among non-friendly population," and so forth.

Those are rather general points, but he made some quite specific comments also that were very, very cogent. I think if I'd seen anything like those at the time, it would have so changed my frame of reference to know there was that much criticism and skepticism within the government, it would have changed my willingness to go along with what McNamara was proposing, about which I was already uneasy. But I didn't see any criticism of it. I didn't see any challenge. And what did I know? I'd never been to Vietnam. [: & dead, in 61'

So it looked strange to me that we should be doing this, but I didn't know that other people in the government were saying, you know, making those points, very precisely. Those were the bigger secrets. Clifford was saying at that time, in July, to the President, "I see nothing ahead but catastrophe for my country." Again, "catastrophe" is not a bureaucratic word to use about somebody else's proposals, especially one that the President is tempted, is probably going to follow. And did follow.

He said, "50,000 men dead, 500,000 men? This is not for us." This was an incredibly prescient statement in '65. We had 100,000 men there then.

Q: This was in the safe?

A: This was in the safe. Yeah. Clifford may not have been. Those are Jack Valenti's notes that probably were not available to McNaughton. The McGeorge Bundy was in the safe.

Q: Go back to the safe. How did it feel, being in this holy of holies?

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A: I was used to being in the safe. I mean, there was all kinds of stuff there. It was all Top Secret. But this was the thing I had been forbidden to see, and what was clear was that this was golden stuff. This was telling me what the big boys were really talking about. And it showed me, for instance, at a glance, I could see they were critical memos, this was material about what McGeorge Bundy really thought, or what the President really thought, or what George Ball really thought. He was the undersecretary of state.

So, if I'd had time - it was late at night. If I'd had time I would have just spent the night reading this stuff. But I decided: "No, I'll come read it tomorrow night."

Q: Did you feel like you were looking at the truth?

A: Yeah, well. "The truth?" No. I knew enough by then to know there is no truth in there, there's no last word. But I was looking at what these people are actually saying to each other, which I wasn't usually privy to. John, after all, was hearing this stuff in White House meetings. And he would do anything, anything, to stay in those White House meetings. There was no question, for example, that he would say anything that would kick him out of the White House meetings, and that was very easy to define. If he had disagreed with

McNamara, ever, in front of the President, he would never have been in the White House again. He told me that.

And he said, "In my business, the family business, in Pekin, Illinois, we run a newspaper, and when we hire an editor, there's one thing we look for: Loyalty." He looked at me very hard on that. And he said, "I've asked myself what I would do if the President asked me" - as did happen a couple of times - "John, what do you think? And I, in my heart, disagreed with what McNamara had said." He said, "I've asked myself how I would act in that situation."

Now, he always disagreed with McNamara when it came to the bombing. On that issue. He thought it was crazy and I thought it was crazy. But McNamara for some reason wanted it. The bombing. So, he said, "What if the President said, 'what do you really think, John?'" He said, "I would have to agree with McNamara." He said, "That's loyalty. That's what he would expect of me, and that's what I would have to do."

And I knew he was telling me that - I wasn't going to be in the White House, but I could have been with McNamara. He was telling me, supposing I agreed, disagreed with John, would I do that in front of John to McNamara? And he was telling me not to.

Well, I didn't say anything. But I thought to myself, just as when Major See told me, "You will be interned, Lieutenant Ellsberg, if the Egyptians decide to intern us." I didn't say to Major See, "bullshit." You know, I said it to myself. And when John said that to me, I thought, "That's okay for you, John. But don't expect me to lie to the Secretary of Defense, if he asks for my opinion, or the President. You know, just to agree with you."

I couldn't dream of refusing the Secretary of Defense, or the President my best opinion, if that's what he was asking for. That was not my concept of loyalty when I was in the Marines, and it was not my concept of loyalty in the Pentagon, to an immediate boss. I did at that time

see the highest loyalty I could imagine to the President. In other words, I would say things to the President that a boss might not like. In fact, things like that came up. Not to the President, but to the Sec Def. And if my boss didn't like it, then fire me. You know, my career would be over but I was not going to refuse that.

It took me till '68 to realize that the President was not the final authority. The Congress did have a right to that information and the public had a right, and that my ultimate, absolute loyalty was not due to the President. It might seem strange that a child of World War II would take that long to depart from the Fuhrer principle that we heard about in the war - the oath to the Fuhrer, the leader. But it did take that long. Most people never got there.

Q: Go back to the safe. You're there, you--

A: Well, so I was reading. I put it back in the safe, with intent to take more time the next day. So the next day I came in at about - you know, I stayed there. And instead of waiting till nine o'clock, as soon as McNaughton had left, I went back to the safe and found - no wait, I think it was earlier. Let's see. Before the evening arrived the doors were locked. And at this moment I can't remember when it was, but I went to the safe to unlock it, and it didn't open. I tried the combination several times. And it didn't open. It was clear the combination had been changed.

Now I'd seen that happen once before. Colonel Roberts, Rogers, military aide, trusted with everybody, very senior Colonel, had suddenly left the office, for reasons I never learned. Maybe the same problem. And the combination, the sign of that was the combination was changed suddenly on the safe, because he, and I, and McNaughton were the three who had access to that. Possibly also Rogers' assistant. But not more than four people had that. So they changed the lock right away. I couldn't help but assume that that was because of what I had looked at the night before. Which I did assume.

How did he know that so fast? But I finally looked at it. And I figured, maybe he put a hair across this, or he had it just arranged just so, so if anybody disturbed it he could tell that I'd looked at it. It seemed amazing that he'd picked that up so fast. So I waited to be told that I was out of a job. And that day, then, McNaughton did call me in and say, "Dan, I believe you're - I've felt for some while that you're overqualified for this job." It was something to this effect. I don't remember this part. He said, "You've been here a year," which was longer than the usual special assistant. And he said, "You're not needed in this job. I can handle a much younger person that's qualified," and stuff like that. And he made some statement like that. He said, "What would you like to do, other than this job?" So, I thought about it for a minute, and I think I said, "Well, I think I would like to do something more like long-range planning." We'd talked about that a few weeks earlier. "And be more free to look into where we're going in Vietnam." He said, "That's great. That's a very good idea." And he said, "We'll get you an office, and you can pursue just whatever you want." Same salary.

He didn't say a word about the safe. It was all very simple. No embarrassment. And they did bring a younger person in afterwards. So I went to an inner office. I didn't have an outer, E-Ring office any more. But I was free now to go around the government and really make reports for a while on where we were going in Vietnam. I actually enjoyed it quite a bit.

Q: Rings, like you didn't have an E-ring--

A: The Pentagon has five rings, concentric rings. And the outer ring - A,B,C,D,E - and the outer ring, the E-Ring, has the views out across the Tidal Basin and various places. In other words, it has windows. The other rings, the inner rings, have windows only on the next ring.

So they are a little more claustrophobic. The E-ring is more prestigious and that's where the President was, I mean the Sec Def was.

Q: The Secretary of Defense?

A: Yeah. We were near the Sec Def's office in the River entrance. It was a nice location.

Q: So you were right there with McNaughton and McNamara?

A: Um-hmm. Well, different offices, but--

Q: Just tell me, if I understand, you're right there at the inner sanctum?

A: Well, it wasn't the inner sanctum. Like I said, the Sec Def's office was the inner sanctum. But the, we were there in the E ring. The admirals on their side - there are different sides of the Pentagon, five sides, had offices in the E-Ring, which is the outer ring, with the better view. Don't follow that?

Q: Oh, I do. Yeah. What ring did you end up in?

A: Oh, the D-Ring or something. It wasn't too far in. It was a bigger office, actually. I was in this little cubbyhole. So I got a bigger office, actually, and, you know, safes, and a drawer, and so forth. But I wasn't in on the day to day stuff any more, which was fine with me, actually, on that point. I had assumed he would fire me some way. Colonel Rogers had just sort of disappeared, gone to the Army or something, put in the burn bag or something. And in my case I was set free to do what I really did like to do.

Q: But McNaughton put you at some distance.

A: I was no longer part of his office. I was in his agency, the International Security Affairs. I still had the same salary. I think I was still carried as a special assistant. But I wasn't his special assistant any more.

Q: Do you think he knew about it, really, from a hair, or do you think there were surveillance cameras, or--

A: No, I don't think there were surveillance cameras. I think it probably was some little, the kind of thing that a spouse will use to make sure their diary is not being looked at by their spouse, or something. You know, I don't know. It did happen so fast. It's not possible that I was removed the day after I'd looked at that book for totally coincidentally, so I took that for granted.

Q: It's like Pandora's box.

A: Yes, and what I was looking at was the forbidden information, which was this: the secret of secrets. The people who had all the intelligence data, and all the operational data that the President had looked at that same - at the highest level, Undersecretary of State, Assistant for National Security - looked at all the information that McNamara had and the President had, and saw an alternative policy for the United State to the one they were following. It would be better, in their point of view. They saw dangers in what the President's point of view was doing.

Well, there's dangers in everything, as they admitted. But they saw an approach that would be a better, safer, gamble than what he was doing. And it was very important for the President not to allow that to get out. It wasn't that they just wanted to keep me from seeing it. Once again, it was keep the circle of people to the absolute minimum, who know this. In fact, these

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papers did not come to light for five, ten, and some cases 20 years after the war. Really, Twenty, 30 years. In fact, they're still appearing.

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The reality - which I didn't know at the time of the Pentagon Papers after I came back from Vietnam. The reality was that all the dangers and the problems that emerged in Vietnam had been foreseen pretty closely by people with full access to all the clearances, and full access to the information. They were all Cold Warriors, all of them. In some cases with longer pedigrees than the President - Clark Clifford, Hubert Humphrey. They had been Cold Warriors before Lyndon Johnson's was, or about the same time. But they thought we do not need to plant the flag here. This is not the right war for us to be in. This would lead to catastrophic results. Granted, the Joint Chiefs were also proposing another way of fighting the war. That I knew. But the President's was not the only alternative to that. There was also the alternative of getting out.

To this day, people who want to defend the President or McNamara, or the policy, will say, "Well, the only real alternative to what we did do was what the Joint Chiefs proposed. That was the alternative. Blow everything up. So don't criticize us." And they want to say, Well, all right, maybe there was an alternative, but we were in a certain milieu," and this, by the way, is what McNamara says to this day: "We were Cold Warriors. We believed in the Domino Theory."

By the way, that's a total cover story. That's a lot of blather. The Domino Theory was not particularly in our minds at all. It really wasn't. Domestic politics as an issue, what the Joint Chiefs wanted us to do and we must keep them under leash. Various things. People were not worried, particularly, about the Domino Theory. That's just a cover story. When you say nobody could conceive that the dominoes wouldn't fall. All, William Bundy, who knew that area better than others. Many CIA experts and so forth. It's not true that Helms's report in

'67 was the first to debunk the Domino Theory. That was old stuff, and so forth. So, if we couldn't imagine a real alternative, we couldn't imagine getting out.

Now, when I heard, in '67, Bobby Kennedy say, "We would have fuzzed it up, we would have gone the Laotian route," that's a perfectly well-defined route. You go to Geneva. We'd done it in Laos. You go to Geneva, you get in the French, the Russians, the Chinese, whoever. Maybe not the Chinese. But maybe the Chinese. The British, for sure. Whoever, we'll get in there and they'll take responsibility for working this out, and we won't let the Communists into the government. They'll let the Communists into the government. And, sure the right wing will say, "Well you really did it. You could have kept them out of there." But we'd say, "Sue us, we're not at war. We're not at war." No President has ever lost an election for keeping us out of a war. Several Presidents who knew they were heading into a war - Wilson, FDR - ran on the campaign that they hadn't gotten us into a war. And they won. George Bush did not promise us a war before he got us into one. Neither of them, actually. So, you don't get into political trouble by staying out of a war, actually. You do get called an appeaser and weakling. But you don't lose the election for that reason.

So those people were able to conceive, these Cold Warriors were able to conceive of staying out of this war, or getting out of it, and the President chose to reject that. And that means that he took the responsibility on himself - very great - that he would prefer not to have known that he had a choice. And McNamara doesn't want it known that he had a choice. And to this day-- So, when you know that he did, when you know that he was reading criticisms from Bundy and Ball and others, that he really had no answer to, and he was reading them, it raises the question, it doesn't answer it: Why did he do this? So you see, that's the enigma that remains. I find '64, '65, for both Johnson and McNamara - and I can't distinguish them - I find that those decisions still mysterious.

I have a theory that I've come to after 30 years, 40 years, as to what they were doing, that makes some sense. Because that's what I want. Because I know that these are conscientious, intelligent men, both of them. How could they have done this? What did they think they were up to? And I worked very hard to try to figure out something that makes sense, and I've arrived at something, a couple of things, that make some sense, but we haven't heard it from McNamara.

Q: What was in their heads?

A: McNamara hasn't told us. He'll say things that are blather, like, "I was hypnotized by the Domino Theory." Let me tell you a story on that one that is very significant.

Q: You can bring the light up. Sorry. Yeah.

A: On the Domino Theory. Richard Goodwin is one of the very few people who has actually told on his boss a couple of things, Lyndon Johnson. That he was - I won't go further. He was Lyndon Johnson's speechwriter and to some extent confidante, until he left. And in his book, I forget what it's called, his memoir about the period. He gives this story which he presents as very critical of McNamara. And he only knows one side of it. The other side gives a very different slant. But the side he presents is very interesting.

After he left the White House and in '65, now, the period I was in the Pentagon, he was very much in favor of a bombing halt. And we got a bombing halt. He wanted the bombing halt to continue and not to be upset. And, actually, Johnson was continuing it a little longer than he'd foreseen in the first place. It went on by a day and by a week and it kept going on for a while in December of '65. And we were sending envoys all over the world to present our case that we wanted negotiations. Very deceptively, actually. Because Johnson had no willingness

to make any concession that could possibly have ended the war. But we were pretending to negotiate.

So Goodwin goes over the McNamara's office with the intent to lobby him to argue for a bombing halt, to continue the bombing halt, maybe to extend it indefinitely. So, as he's talking to McNamara, who he knew pretty well from before, he says - I think it may have been the last time he saw him - he said, "Suddenly McNamara interrupted me and he pointed to the map of Asia on his wall, a huge wall map of Asia."

And he said, "You know, Dick," said McNamara, "What do you think it would do to the security of the United States if all of that went Communist?" And he pointed to Southeast Asia, not just Vietnam, but Malaya, Burma, and India. He said, "What if it all went Communist?" And Goodwin said, "Well," I said, "Mr. Secretary, I really am not an expert on that, and it's not really what I want to talk about. I want to talk about the bombing halt." And, as he was saying that, McNamara said, "Nothing. It wouldn't mean anything at all. It wouldn't affect us at all." Which is a pretty true statement, actually, pretty realistic.

Goodman said he was absolutely floored by this. As he describes it in the book - you can look up his account. He said, "I was just stunned that the Secretary of Defense was telling me that it didn't make any difference if the dominoes all fall, including India." Just, parenthetically here again, what's the answer to it? What difference could it make? You know. But, in theory, the whole government was focused on the need to keep Burma from going Communist, or the possibility that if South Vietnam went Communist, Malaya would go Communist.

Now, in between Malaya and South Vietnam is Thailand. Thailand had never been colonized. Thailand was never even close to going Communist. It had a little Communist insurgency, but had no trouble with it. There was no chance that the Communists would extend control

of Malaya through Thailand. And the CIA, essentially, always said that. But that was the big domino. That wasn't going to happen. That was silly. Laos would go Communist. Cambodia would go Communist. Indochina would go Communist. The party that Ho Chi Minh had founded was the Indochinese Communist Party, and he certainly intended to control all of the former French colonial possessions. There was no reason to think that he was ever going into Thailand. Thailand was not worried about it, and of course nothing like that happened.

But, so here he's saying "But it doesn't matter if they go into Thailand, or if they go into India. It doesn't affect the U.S."

Q: What year was this?

A: This was '65. It was January of '66, I believe. January '66. So Goodwin is saying - by the way, I never heard McNamara say anything like that, but that's exactly what McNaughton would have said. McNaughton did say things like that. This means that McNamara was in total sync with McNaughton. Totally contradictory to anything - of course McNamara always did talk dominoes. But I knew that was, at the time that didn't amount to anything. He was just saying that. But I never heard him actually say that it didn't make any difference.

OK

So Goodwin said, "I didn't know what to say. I was absolutely floored and I sort of made my departures, I didn't carry on my lobbying." And he left, clearly thinking very ill of McNamara, why is McNamara doing all this if he doesn't believe it matters?

Q: Because the President wants him to?

A: Well, that's an answer. I talked to Goodwin. There's another side to it, though, that Goodwin didn't know, apparently. He hadn't read easily available history at this point, and I asked him about this. It's clear from the book that he didn't know then or when he wrote the memoir that McNamara was the author of the bombing halt. He had put all of his bureaucratic chips on getting that bombing halt. The only reason that the bombing halt stayed on as long as it did was McNamara was begging for it to continue. McNamara was doing everything Goodwin wanted him to do. And McNamara didn't tell Goodwin that. Didn't tell him. And Goodwin didn't guess it. He was an outsider at that point. He didn't guess it. He never had picked it up. So the bombing halt ends, because, finally, there's no negotiation.

Why is there no negotiation? Because the North Vietnamese discerned that there was no give in the American position, which there wasn't. By the way, McNamara does seem - you talk about self-deception and lies. McNamara keeps saying, in Hanoi, and in his books, and everywhere, an absolutely absurd statement, which he said the North Vietnamese - It could hardly be more absurd. I infer that he actually has deluded himself into believing it was true. And that is, his memory has betrayed him here. He said to Hanoi, the reason he set up the Hanoi conference--

Q: One thing I want you to mention. Don't you have the Ellsberg Proposition? That I find very fascinating.

A: What? That anyone can be as dumb as he has to be to keep his job?

Q: Yes.

A: In this case McNamara was not being dumb. He was revealing to Goodwin that he wasn't crazy. It didn't make any difference to us if Malaysia and Burma were Communist, how could it make any difference.

Q: Take my slight amendment to the Ellsberg Principle. That anybody can believe what they need to in order to keep their job.

A: Yes. Up to a point. But if they have to believe it. If they can't afford the chance that they might betray the wrong attitude, they can come to believe it. Yes, that's true. But I'm saying. We're not talking about McNamara keeping his job now. He's been out of the World Bank. He's retired. His President is dead. Both Presidents are dead. Here's the proposition that he says.

Q: He still sees himself in the job?

A: In the job?

Q: I think he does. *to stay in the job...*

A: Well, somebody said the other day, about the Council on Foreign Relations. They quoted Les Gelb as saying "We're the only organization where you stay a member after you're dead." And that explains something to me. Because the lack of deathbed confessions, or acknowledgements, or truth-telling, by almost anybody, has puzzled me for a long time. Why don't they come clean, finally, and betray their bosses, who have been long dead before them. And I really think they sort of expect to be channeled back as consultants from the other world. They want to keep their fidelity. They want to be as reliable in death as they ever were.

He never talked. A stand-up guy. It's the Mafia code. They'll be remembered as somebody who never broke the faith and didn't spill his guts, was never a snitch. I'm not an informer, and so forth. I've, of course, given up that clean reputation, exactly. But these people really do want to go to their death never having told a secret that they're not supposed to tell. And McNamara today is pretty much there. He writes a book, *In Retrospect*, that almost in no respect goes beyond what I made public with the Pentagon Papers 25 years earlier. What *In Retrospect* does is to acknowledge that he saw it the way the Pentagon Papers revealed. But the Pentagon Papers are far from the last word. I knew that at the time and I've known it ever since.

He doesn't reveal his actual conversations with Presidents except in a couple of cases where there are tapes that are public. But he won't add to the public knowledge in any respect. But let me now get to this point, which I think he really does believe. And it's wildly unrealistic. He actually says to the Communists, and this is why he set up the conference, "I wanted the Hanoi conference because I believed that I wanted us both to agree to acknowledge that there were lost opportunities. That there were mistakes on both sides." As of course, they were. The Vietnamese are very, very human, and they made a lot of big mistakes. I have no question about that in my mind. The North Vietnamese.

But he wanted them to acknowledge that there had been opportunities to end the war on mutual acceptable terms, right from the beginning. And so, all of these deaths were not attributable to him alone, and the President, but to the fact that there was obtuseness on the side of the North Vietnamese, too. They shared responsibility. He really, over and over, explicitly tries to get them to say, "We both are responsible for all these tragic deaths."

Q: It's not just my fault?

— LBJ —

you share responsibility
I'm making an effort
to sharing it — with some
living people, not just
a dead Pres

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(I do share it, of course,
but I can tell them, then
in the case of a dead Pres...

A: It's not just me. And they wouldn't say that. They wouldn't accept anything. They'd say "No, we were defending our country, we didn't make mistakes." They did make mistakes. Who doesn't? But they say, "We didn't make mistakes. We defended our country. You were the one who were on the wrong path." They didn't talk about mistakes for us, "But if you want to say you made mistakes, all right. But we do not accept that responsibility. We did what we had to do, and so forth." So McNamara keeps saying, "But, all these people died, when if we'd understood each other, we could have avoided the war from the beginning, and avoided all those lives."

The fact is, that the way it ended up, which was North Vietnamese Communist control of all of Vietnam - American troops unilaterally withdrawn in 1973, North Vietnamese troops stay in the country, carry out offensives against our American-aided puppets, and win the country. He says, "You could have had that control from the beginning if we'd understand that you didn't want to go into Thailand, that you didn't have designs on all of Southeast Asia, which they didn't. All you wanted was Laos and Cambodia. You could have had that."

Q: It's a misunderstanding.

A: Yeah, it's a misunderstanding. That's psychotic. That's absurd as a statement of our position. What he's describing is the position that he had as of 1967, when he proposed it in May and in November. It wasn't shared by anybody that Johnson showed that memo to. Possibly Nick Katzenbach would have gone along with it. There might have been others in secret who would have gone along with it, but generally it was just rejected and denounced by everybody. There is not a hint of evidence, and I don't believe that Lyndon Johnson would have accepted that deal any day or month of his Presidency. And if McNamara were asked simply that, "Are you saying that the Paris Accords, or the final result, in '75, would have been accepted by your boss, Lyndon Johnson in '64 or '65 or '66 or '67?"

I don't know what he would say but it would be absurd to say "Yes." He's attributing his position as of '67 to Lyndon Johnson, and that's crazy. You might as well attribute it to Goldwater. Or the Joint Chiefs. So, there was, in fact, no lost opportunity.

Q: But maybe it was his dream that this had happened.

A: Yeah. His dream that it could have happened. But it's a dream. I can't totally explain it. It would be worth questioning McNamara. Do you know why McNamara was not invited back? I was told. He says, in his interview.

Q: Invited back to North Vietnam?

A: Back to North Vietnam. What is the reason he gives they told him, if they had to say something tactfully. They wouldn't give him a visa. And what was it? Too controversial., or something. I forget what it was he said. I was told that the reason was, by the people who were invited back, that the North Vietnamese had been struck by the amount of deference paid to this absurd view by all the other American participants.

When I read the transcript of that conference, I said, the other participants - some of them were former associates or subordinates of McNamara like Chet Cooper from the NSC, and they might not have wanted to argue with McNamara. But some of these were quite independent historians. At least they looked independent as far as I knew. How could they sit there and let their fellow American say something quite that absurd?[?] They had to know that it was all ridiculous.

The U.S. had never offered such a thing. The U.S. was - the U.S. in the form of Johnson - was never willing to entertain such a thing. And when McNamara proposed it, in November 1, 1967, he deliberately wrote, "I'm not giving a copy of this to anyone. It's a super

secret.” Like those memos I was forbidden to see in ’65, which had been said by Ball, Clifford, Hubert Humphrey, Richard – this is the view of Richard Russell, Johnson’s mentor in the Senate; Fulbright, the Senate Foreign Relations leader; Mike Mansfield, the Senate Majority leader. They all held this view that that’s what we should offer in ’65 before we did the buildup. McNamara was then opposing it, for Johnson. But not because it would be political suicide for Johnson to do something else. Political suicide to do what the Senate majority leader, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Richard Russell - the three most powerful men in the Senate that had 67 Democrats, *wanted him to do?*

Q: Johnson wanted to win the war.

A: I don’t think so. He would have liked to win the war, but that’s not the answer. Johnson has never given any indication - now we’re getting on the point and we’re right at the end here. I don’t think that’s what Johnson was up to.

The Joint Chiefs wanted to win the war. They thought they had a way to do it. We don’t know. It was never tried. I don’t believe it would have won the war. It had great risks, and they had to admit this, of nuclear war with China. I don’t believe it would have caused the North Vietnamese to give up. But Johnson was not willing to find out on that, because the risks were too great. He had lived through the first war with China, in Korea, under Truman, and he didn’t want to do that again. Nor did he want to lose, like Truman had lost, FDR, and Truman had lost China. He didn’t want to face that charge.

What did that leave? I thought, as of 1972, as late as that, that the best answer was not that he was trying to win. He wasn’t doing what the Joint Chiefs said was necessary to win. He wasn’t willing to take those risks. No one told him that what he was doing would win, or had any real chance of winning. So I explained that what he was doing is that he was trying not to

lose. He was doing what was necessary not to lose while he was in office. To keep Saigon from going Communist while he was in office, and pass it on to the next President. But Arthur Schlesinger pointed out, he was doing more than was necessary for that doesn't really explain it. And Arthur said – a criticism of my position - that he thought he was trying to win.

That bothered me. I was trying to understand this over the years. But I had to admit that Arthur was right to this extent. He didn't need 200,000, 300,000 troops, 500,000 to avoid losing. He didn't need that. You could do that with 70,000 to 100,000., which is what Bill Bundy proposed, McGeorge Bundy was back of, George Ball would have gone along with, as opposed to the 500,000. You could keep from losing with 100,000 troops while you kept them there. Then if you took them out, you'd lose. But you wouldn't do any better with 500,000. So it was a real problem of explaining how he did it. And I finally, with the help of Mort Halperin, I think arrived at a better description of what it was he was trying to do.

He was trying to do two things: Not lose; and, keep the Joint Chiefs from denouncing him publicly as a no-win President who would never win the war and was not doing what they wanted, was not doing what was necessary to win. So he was giving them year by year enough to keep them aboard. At one point, in '67, they came within a hair's breadth of revolting. They spent all night in the Chairman's office - Chairman Wheeler's office. And I was told this by the Deputy to the Chief of Staff of the Army, that the Chief's spent the night in Wheeler's office after McNamara had testified in the Stennis committee that we should keep up the bombing we were doing at that point, But no more because more would not do any good.

We were achieving something with the bombing. Sending more bombing, the way the Chiefs wanted, would not improve matters. The Chief ^{was} so furious at what they took as a lie by McNamara and a bad judgment, that that night they considered doing what Chairman

Wheeler said, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, had said: "Let's all resign tomorrow morning." The mutiny. The mutiny, essentially. "We all resign and say we cannot go along with the lies and the bad judgment of this administration."

Now the lie they saw, which was a lie, was that the bombing was actually accomplishing something. McNamara had said that. He wasn't ready then to go publicly and say, "No bombing, end the bombing." He said that in November, to the President alone, and he got fired for it.

Q: Bombing is accomplishing nothing.

A: It was accomplishing nothing. So he was not prepared to say the bombing was accomplishing nothing. The Chief^s said this bombing is accomplishing nothing. So his statement that the bombing is okay the way it is, is a lie. And they knew that. And it was a lie. As a matter of judgment, they totally disagreed with his statement that more bombing would not accomplish anything.

They would have said, "Yeah, bombing on these stupid targets that he's letting us bomb will accomplish nothing, but to do the job right, you have to bomb the targets near the Chinese border, you have to mine Haiphong, you have to do this, this, and that. Then we could win."

Q: Let me make one fast suggestion here.

A: Better go.

Q: What if Johnson wanted to be John F. Kennedy?

A: Get assassinated?

Q: No, not in that respect.

A: Yeah.

Q: But in respect to--

A: He just might have thought of that.

Q: Yes, but in respect to the Cuban missile crisis, he watched while the Kennedy brothers forced the other side to blink. Perhaps he thought, too, I, Lyndon Johnson, can wait this out and without getting into a nuclear confrontation, I can force the other side to blink.

A: Actually I believe that since he was determined not to do what the Joint Chiefs wanted him to do, but he was not determined to go down so far that the Joint Chiefs would revolt, and he got awfully close to that, at that point. I not only can believe, I do believe that he convinced himself that there was some chance that we would luck out and win with what he was doing, and Walt Rostow encouraged him to believe that often. Walt Rostow was also telling him to do more, like the Chiefs.

But I can believe that Johnson thought, "They all say I can't win," but probably there were days when he knew he couldn't win that way. My point, though, is that no one told him that. If he thought that, it's his responsibility, that he had hoped. It was hopeful, it was wishful thinking. And it could have been right.

Q: A vision of personal power.

A: Well, nobody knows. Most of the tapes we have suggest that he didn't spend much time being very euphoric about how things were going to turn out in Vietnam. He did occasionally. At some times there were points when he actually felt, I think in late '68, that they might be suing for surrender. He was wrong. Totally wrong. But I think that he may have hoped. He hoped so much to get an acceptable settlement from them before he left office in late '68.

I think there is evidence that there was a period, for example, when he actually, against all real evidence, he allowed himself to believe that maybe he could pull this off. And so we had a lost opportunity under Johnson. There's no indication that he ever considered making the concessions that were minimally essential to getting a deal. Even came close to that.

So even McNamara whole thesis of his book, *Argument Without End*, lost opportunity after lost opportunity, is total fantasy. If he'd been President the opportunity wouldn't have been lost, the war would have been ended. If Clark Clifford, McGeorge - not McGeorge, I don't know about McGeorge, different case. Fulbright, Mansfield - all, by the way, candidates for Vice President, could have been President. They could have been John F. Kennedy's Vice President instead of Johnson. I believe that if any of them had been President, including Hubert Humphrey, the war would have been averted or ended.

So the fact that there was a Cold War on did not, in my opinion, mean that the war was inevitable. But Johnson wasn't the only one who would have carried it on, either. If Nixon had been President, in other words, if there had been an honest vote in Illinois and Texas, then I believe the war would have blown much bigger in the early sixties. It would have been worse than Johnson. We don't have to look to Goldwater. Just look to Nixon, or various others.

So it could have been worse. And it could have been better. I don't think that the Cold War milieu determined those events. It did make a difference who was President actually. If John F. Kennedy had remained President, I agree with McNamara, for reasons he won't spell out. I think that he would have gotten out of Vietnam. But McNamara doesn't want to spell out how Kennedy would have been different, and I'll give a conjecture as to why he doesn't.

Because that would raise the question, well, if there was a way out, namely an international conference where we were prepared to accept a coalition government, that's the way out. That's what Mansfield urged, Richard Russell, urged - Johnson's mentor - Fulbright, etc. A lot of people were urging this. Lippman was urging this, in the press.

If McNamara admitted - for Johnson, he batted that down. I believe that if McNamara thoroughly accepted that prospect in '63, as well as '64, '65, and '66. But he has a President who was not willing to entertain that at all because that would look like a sellout. It would be denounced as a sell out. It would have been denounced as a sellout. And he did not, was not willing to face that charge. Even if he stayed President. So McNamara now had a new President. He'd lost a President who was willing to accept a Laotian solution, which he was too. He had a new President who was not willing to accept that and never was, never came to be. What to do?

If he admitted that that's what Kennedy had in mind, and that he had agreed with it, he would face the question, did you press that on Lyndon Johnson? Did you try to bring him around to that? I don't know what he would say for sure, because there's no evidence he ever raised that possibility, ever, with Johnson, until '67, two years later, three years later, when he got fired for it. And he did get fired.

Supposing he'd raised that then, in '64. Did he have another choice? Say the President rejects it? Did he agree with Clifford, that that other course was disastrous, catastrophic, as all

these other people did? I don't know, but he should've. Could've. Say he did. What should he then do? Try to convince the President. The President is adamant on that point. I don't think he would have given in very quickly. There's no evidence that he would have. Ball was urging him in those terms. And he rejected them.

So what is there to do? I suggested earlier. Essentially, form an alliance with the other members of the U.S. Government and the Congress who believe in that approach.¹¹ U.S. Government? Congress?¹² I thought you said U.S. Government. We're the Government. The President is the Government.¹³ Well, from a certain point of view, You know, ensconced in the Constitution, Congress is part of the Government.

Supposing you join with Congress on this. Say you resign. And work with Congress. You testify. Or you don't resign. You tell the truth to Congress. You give them documents. You tell them where to go to get other testimony. You mobilize the public. You change the political environment in which the President is operating. How do you change it? By letting the public know that informed, responsible, authoritative men who have a pedigree of interest in the national security perceive an alternative course to either the President's course or the Joint Chiefs. You debate that. Johnson was determined to avoid a debate. He did not want Congress to go either the dove route or the JCS route, and either of those would look better than what he was doing, which looked useless, so you had to avoid a debate.

McNamara is a servant to the President, who, like me, earlier, could not conceive of a better way to be a loyal American than to serve the President of the United States. I couldn't imagine a better way to do that. The President might be wrong, but how can you do better to serve your country than to try to set him right by talking to him, by giving him information, by doing whatever, by being loyal?¹⁴ Well, actually there is a better way. By checking his abuse of power. Checking his usurpation and his lies from Congress and the courts and the electorate. But they're not going to do that unless they understand that the situation is

CBS heard
a memo
after an
of public
initially
supported
dove route
(or hawk
route)

(when he's wrongheaded)

desperate and there is a better way. There is a better way. And they're not going to believe that from just anybody who comes along. But they are going to believe it with sufficiently informed Congressmen. And ex-officials.

Look at what Joseph Wilson did recently.

Q: We just ran out.

A: And I'm out of here, okay?

Q: Okay.

A: I'm late, I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date.